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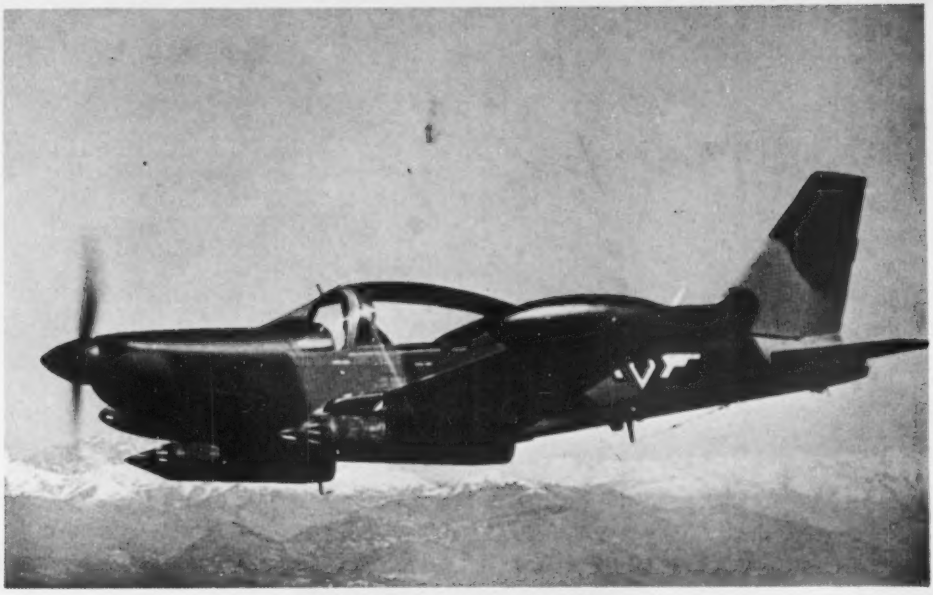

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The fact that an article appears in this journal does not indicate official approval of the views expressed by the author. Under the auspices of the Army Authorities.

The assistance of Capt. J. Kirke, Air Corps, and the Air Corps Photographic Section, with this issue is acknowledged. Photos, unless otherwise credited, are from the Air Corps Photo Section.

Cover: Hawker Hurricane.

This was the Air Corps first single seat monoplane fighter with retractable gear. The first three arrived by courtesy of forced landings in 1942/43 and the Air Corps had them repaired and pressed into service. Their service Nos. were 93, 94, 95. In 1943/44 the Corps took delivery of 11 MK I's (Ser. Nos. 103-114) and 94 and 95 were returned to the RAF. In 1945 a further 6 MK II's were delivered and allotted serial Nos. 115-120. The last Hurricane was boarded in 1947.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AIR CORPS

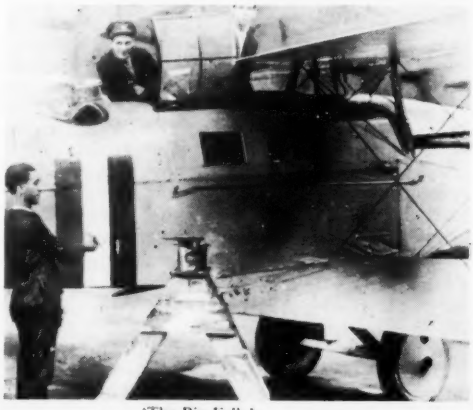
Updated by:- Lt. Col. M. Cassidy, Air Corps HQ.

Eight Vickers Vespas were purchased in 1930/31 for Army Co-Op duties until they were supplanted in that role by the Westland Lysander.

AFTER the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921, the Provisional Government set up an Irish Aviation Department with its HQ at Beggar's Bush Barracks, Dublin. Two Officers, who had served with distinction in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War, and had later joined the IRA, founded the Irish Air Service, which subsequently became the Air Corps. They were Maj-Gen. T. W. MacSweeney, who was OC Air Service and Director of Military Aviation, and Maj-Gen. C. F. Russell who was second-in-Command and Director of Civil Aviation.

The first aircraft which the Irish Air Service operated was a forerunner of the present day government transport aircraft. It was a five-seater Martinsyde A MK-2 which had been purchased by the Provisional Government for the purpose of flying Gen. Michael Collins out of England quickly should the Treaty negotiations of 1921 fail. With a price of £10,000 on Collins' head, this was a sensible precaution and fortunately one which was not needed. MacSweeney and Russell returned home after the Treaty agreement and the aircraft which was named the 'City of Dublin' and nicknamed 'The Big Fella' was later shipped to Dublin.

Up to 1922 Baldonnel, now called Casement



'The Big Fella'

Aerodrome, was the Royal Flying Corps HQ in Ireland. Other RFC bases were at Collinstown (now Dublin Airport), Tallaght Co. Dublin, Gormanston Co. Meath, Fermoy Co. Cork, Oranmore Co. Galway and Aldergrove Co. Antrim. On 17th February 1922, the last of the British left Baldonnel and the buildings lay deserted for two months until taken over in April 1922 as the Headquarters of the new Air Service.

Early Aircraft and Pilots

The task of obtaining new aircraft for the Service was a relatively easy one as there were plenty of good quality war-surplus aircraft available on the market. A Squadron, called No. 1 Squadron, was formed and was equipped with eight de Havilland 9 Bombers, four single-seater Martinsyde F.4S's, six Avro 504Ks and eight Bristol Fighters. 'The Big Fella' continued in service until 1924 when, regretfully for everyone interested in historic aircraft, it was broken up and only its propeller boss has been preserved. It can be seen in the Officers Mess, Casement Aerodrome. The Avro 504 was the standard trainer of the period. The Bristol Fighters and the Martinsyde Scouts were current fighters at the time. The de Havilland 9A was the most modern British bomber available during that era. The one and only S.E 5 in service force-landed near Mallow in 1922 and was burned.

While aircraft could be purchased, the recruiting of Pilots and technicians was more difficult. Pilots and technicians with foreign service were in short supply and much in demand in the new Air Service. One such pilot inducted in 1922 was Lt. James Fitzmaurice, later to become world-famous for his trans-Atlantic flight. Some of the pilots had, however, no previous flying experience. Technicians likewise were a mixture of experience and inexperience. Another category who were prominent during this period were Observers, most of them commissioned officers and the remainder of sergeant rank.

With Baldonnel as the main base of the Air Service, it was decided in 1922 that bases were needed in the Southern and South-Western parts of the Country. Fermoy aerodrome was reopened in 1922 and closed in 1924. Another new aerodrome in Tralee was opened up in December 1922 but closed again after about a year. The reasons for these closures are not clear but it was probably due to the more settled state of the country in 1923/24, and the aircraft and crews returned to Baldonnel.

In 1923, Major T. J. Maloney succeeded Major General W. J. McSweeney as Officer Commanding the Air Corps. Amongst the Officers who served in the Air Corps at this time were Lieuts. G. Carroll, J. Fitzmaurice, W. P. Delamere and P. Quinn, all of whom were later to Command the Air Corps. Lieut. Fitzmaurice became a pioneer of Atlantic flying and Lt. Delamere became Airport Manager at

Bristol F2B: Entered Air Corps Service in 1922 when 8 were bought. Serial Nos. were BF1-BF8. In 1925 6 more were purchased - Serial Nos. were 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. The last three were scrapped in 1935.

Dublin Airport, Lieut. Quinn retired in 1960 as a Colonel. In 1924 Major Maloney was killed in a crash and was succeeded by Colonel Russell.

1926 is notable as being the first year in which cadets were recruited for the Air Corps. These were the first cadets to be taken into the Defence Forces through the newly established procedure of a competitive Civil Service examination. Among this class was Cadet W. J. Keane, who was later to become the first Commanding Officer of the Air Corps to be appointed from the ranks of those officers who served as Cadets.

In 1925, six Bristol Fighters were added to the Corps strength and also four de Havilland Moth elementary trainers. In 1928, a Fairy III F, and, in 1930, three new Avro 621 Mongoose (Tutor) elementary trainers were purchased. The Avro 621s were painted black with silver wings. This colour scheme was retained for all elementary trainers until the early 1950s.

During 1930 and 1931 eight Vickers Vespa army co-operation aircraft were purchased, and during this period parachutes were introduced to the Corps. In 1932, seven Avro Cadets were acquired, the first Air Corps aircraft to have wheel brakes.

Four general purpose trainers were procured in 1934. These Avro 626s were used for front and rear gunnery instruction, in addition to instruction in navigation, radio and photography. They were also used for general flying training. In 1935, four Avro 636 aircraft were bought. They were powered by engines taken from Air Corps Vespas which were no longer serviceable.

The Atlantic Conquered

About this time the great goal in aviation was to fly the Atlantic from East to West. Baldonnel, being the nearest aerodrome to America, was visited by some famous aviators and aircraft. A few had tried the flight and were never heard of again, others were rescued, but so far no one had succeeded. In September, 1927, Comdt. James Fitzmaurice of the Air Corps and Captain McIntosh, another Atlantic aspirant, took off from Baldonnel, but like all the

The Bremen

The Southern Cross piloted by Charles Kingsford-Smith completed the second successful East/West Crossing of the Atlantic. He took off from Portmarnock Strand and was given every assistance by the Air Corps.

others, they failed. After flying about 500 miles out over the Atlantic, they returned and landed on the strand at Ballybunion.

But for Comdt. Fitzmaurice another opportunity presented itself the following year. At dawn on the 12th April 1928 Fitzmaurice with two Germans as companions - Capt. Kohl, co-pilot, and Baron Huenefeld, as passenger - took off from Baldonnel in a Junkers aircraft 'The Bremen' and one more effort was made to conquer the Atlantic from East to West. The cruising speed of 'The Bremen' was 95 mph. It had no radio. That day and night passed without word. Everyone anxiously awaited news. Then on the night of Friday 13th April, the world heard the news that 'Bremen' had crossed the Atlantic and landed on Greenly Island Labrador, exactly 37 hours after taking off from Baldonnel.

The crew of 'The Bremen' returned, first to Germany, and later to Ireland where they received a tumultuous welcome in O'Connell Street Dublin. Some memorabilia of this great flight may be seen in the Officers Mess, Casement Aerodrome.

The Air Corps again figured in an Atlantic Flight when on 24th June 1930 it assisted the famous Charles Kingsford Smith to get his aircraft, the equally famous 'Southern Cross' off the ground at Portmarnock Strand. This was to be the second successful East to West crossing. 'The Southern Cross' had three engines, was equipped with radio and carried a crew of four, among whom was Capt. J. P. Saul who later became Chief Air Traffic Control Officer at Shannon Airport.

In the late twenties and early thirties, Baldonnel was the only active aerodrome in the twenty-six counties. Consequently, quite a number of non-military flights which aroused interest among the public started or ended there.

In 1928 the Irish Aero Club was founded and operated from Baldonnel until 1938. Its first flying instructor was the retired Col. Charles Russell and one of his early pupils was the writer-poet Senator Oliver St. John Gogarty. Gogarty at this time became friendly with the popular and personable Lt. Arthur Russell and composed a moving poem in Arthur's memory after the latter's death in a flying accident in 1934.

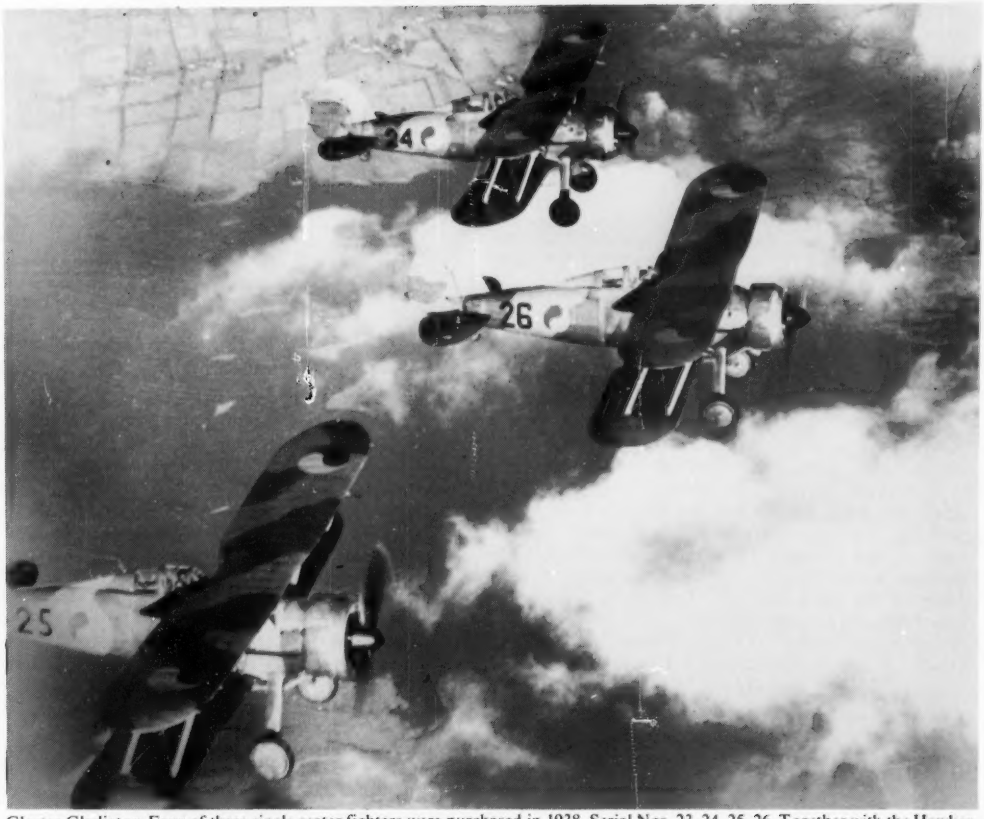
In June 1932 the Air Corps participated in the ceremonies marking the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin which was attended by over one million people. The mail-steamer carrying the Papal Legate Cardinal Lauri, who presided over the Congress, was escorted into Dun Laoire by a flight of Air Corps aircraft flying in the formation of a cross. The out-door ceremonies were photographed from the air by an Air Corps Vespa.

The Air Corps assisted Jim Mollison, husband of the famous Amy Johnson, in his preparations for the flight which was to become the first solo crossing of the Atlantic East to West. Mr. Mollison took off from Portmarnock Strant in a de Haviland Puss Moth on the morning of 20 August 1932 and flew 2600 miles non-stop to Roosevelt Field, Long Island, N.Y.

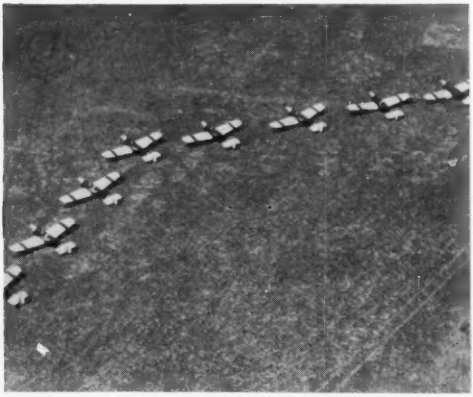
In 1934, an Italian aircraft, 'Leonardo da Vinci' which had been flown across the Atlantic in the Summer of 1934, by Pont and Sabelli, had been damaged while landing at Lahinch in Co. Clare. This aircraft was brought to Baldonnel and repaired by the Air Corps. It later continued its flight to Italy.

In 1935 the Government ordered a survey for the purpose of opening an international airport and flying boat terminal in the Shannon area - Lieut. J. Moynihan and photographer Cpl. Charlie Rooney carried out a photographic survey of the area for the Dept. of Industry and Commerce in a Vickers Vespa aircraft.

To ensure an adequate supply of technicians to keep its aircraft airworthy, the Air Corps started a Boy Apprentice Scheme in 1936. Boys recruited under this scheme were required to serve for nine years in the regular service and three years on the Reserve. They started their careers by undergoing two years in the Apprentice School, after which they were graded as one star technicians. During their third year, they practiced their trade under supervision in the Technical Wing. Many boys who began their aviation careers in this way now hold executive positions in civilian aviation as well as in industry generally.



Gloster Gladiator: Four of these single seater fighters were purchased in 1938. Serial Nos. 23, 24, 25, 26. Together with the Hawker-Hind & Hector they were the 'sharp end' of the Air Corps until the arrival of the Hurricane.



Miles Magister: These two-seat basic trainers gave sterling service in the Air Corps. The first batch of 10 was delivered in 1939 (Ser. Nos. 31-40). In 1940 a further 5 aircraft were delivered (ex RAF) Serial Nos. 73-77. The final batch of 12 aircraft was delivered (ex RAF) in 1946, Serial Nos. 127-138. They were finally supplanted in the training role by the Chipmunk in 1952. The Technical Training Squadron has restored a Magister S/N 34 to Static Display Condition. It is at present stored at Casement Aerodrome.

Prior to 1936 Ireland had not operated scheduled airline services, but on 27th May of that year a small De Havilland 84, 5 seater aircraft, took off from Baldonnel at 9 a.m. Its destination was Bristol. This was the start of Aer Lingus operations. The complete staff of Aer Lingus, at this time, including executives, aircrew and maintenance personnel, numbered 12. The Company continued to operate from Baldonnel until Dublin Airport was opened in 1940.

1937 was interesting for two notable reasons. It was in this year that Baldonnel was included in the King's Cup Air Race, as a night stop. Many famous pilots and aircraft visited the airfield on that occasion. That year was also notable for the Air Corps because of the introduction of twin engined aircraft. The first of this type to be procured was a De Havilland Dragon. It was specially fitted for photographic and target towing missions.

The first Air Corps Ansons also came into service in that year. The Anson was the first monoplane used by the Corps and it was also the first aircraft to go into service with the Corps which incorporated a retractable undercarriage. It was on these aircraft that the present method of displaying the Air Corps emblem, in the form of a Green and Orange celtic boss, was introduced. In all, twelve of these aircraft were purchased between 1937 and 1946. In 1961, one of those purchased in 1945 was still in service.

One fine day in the Summer of 1938, a small single engined aircraft landed unannounced at Baldonnel and taxied on to the apron. The young pilot of the aircraft got out and inquired where he was. On being told that he was in Ireland, he expressed amazement and then explained that he had taken off from New York 30 hours previously, intending to fly to California. His explanation for arriving in Ireland was that he must have read the compass the wrong way - an opinion which won for him the name of 'Wrongway Corrigan'.

The first line strength of the Air Corps was augmented in 1938 by the acquisition of four Gladiator fighters. These were the last biplane fighters to be used by the Corps. They remained in service until 1944. Fifteen Miles Magister trainers were purchased in 1939/40. Those aircraft served the Corps very well and many young pilots started their careers on them. Twelve more of these aircraft were purchased in 1946. During the first half of 1939, three Walrus amphibian aircraft arrived in Baldonnel. These were the only amphibians ever operated by the Corps. The last aircraft to arrive in Baldonnel before the Second World War were six Army co-operation Lysanders. Both Lysander and Gladiator type aircraft saw service with the RAF in the early part of World War II before being superseded by more modern types.

World War II Years

Rineanna, now known as Shannon Airport, was occupied by a detachment from the Air Corps on the 30th August 1939. The mission of this detachment was to patrol the South to West Coasts. Shannon Airport was yet to be built and there was then little of the glamour which later came to be associated with this airport. All the more welcome, therefore, was the visit there of Mr. De Valera, who arrived one day aboard an Air Corps aircraft from Baldonnel. The Air Corps was to occupy Rineanna until the 1st May 1945.

Across the Shannon at Foynes seaplanes had been taking off and landing since 1939, and in so doing established the first commercial air routes across the Atlantic. Until Foynes ceased to be used as a transatlantic base, Air Corps officers assisted these operations by acting as Air Traffic Control Officers. This was really the beginning of the Irish Air Traffic Control Service, now operated by the Department of Transport. A number of civil Air Traffic Control Officers began their careers in the Air Corps either as Regular or Short Service Officers, before transferring to civil ATC, during the early years of their service.

A short service officer pilot scheme was commenced in August, 1939 with the intake of 11 candidates. A second class of 20 were taken in the following year. This scheme was superseded in 1943 when 31 young men were selected for training as Sergeant Pilots. A very large percentage of these Sergeant Pilots, in addition to some of the Short Service Officers, subsequently transferred their services to Aer Lingus.

In order to meet training committments, particularly these of intermediate training, it became necessary to purchase 6 Hawker Hinds in 1940 and 13 Hectors in 1941 and 1942. These aircraft were second-hand. They had been designed originally as army co-operation aircraft, but they were found to be unsuitable in this role, and consequently they were converted to trainers.

Beginning in September 1941 small numbers of the famous Hurricane fighters began to arrive in the Air Corps. Two of these were RAF aircraft which had crash-landed in the Republic and were impounded. Eventually sufficient were purchased Fairey Battle and an American Lockheed Hudson crash landed, the Fairey Battle at Tramore and the crash landed, the Fairy Battle at Tramore and the Hudson in Sligo. All these aircraft were repaired at Baldonnel and put into service with the Corps. The Hudson was the aircraft in which Mr. De Valera later flew to Rineanna to visit the detachment there.

By 1943, seven Miles Master trainer aircraft had gone into service and these were to be joined in 1943 by six more. They were employed as advanced trainers until their replacement by Spitfire trainers in 1951.

The Avro Anson was the first Air Corps Aircraft to have retractable under carriage. The first four, Nos. 19-22, were delivered in 1937/38, then a further five were delivered in 1939. These were Nos. 41-45. Finally in 1943 three C.19's were delivered Nos. 141-143 and one of these is awaiting restoration in Baldonnel.

The Super-marine Spitfire T9 was one of the Classic aircraft of all time. The Air Corps operated the two-seater training version in the advanced training role from 1951 until they were supplanted by the DH VAMPIRE in 1956. The last Spitfire was sold in 1968. Serial Nos. were 158-163.

In addition to normal flying duties, the Air Corps had to undertake many additional duties consequent to the outbreak of war in Europe. One of these duties was to collect information from various sources, on the movement of belligerent aircraft, shipping, drifting barrage baloons, mines, personnel, materials washed or brought ashore and on sundry other odd but less frequent happenings. This information was collected by a Central Control which was established in the quiet seclusion of the monastery at Clondalkin, Co. Dublin. By 1944, this control was handling over 30,000 reports a year of aircraft seen or heard over or near our territory.

Altogether during the war, 163 belligerent aircraft crashed on our territory. There was a total of 830 aircrew aboard these aircraft, of whom 223 died in the crashes. It was the responsibility of the Air Corps to salvage each of these crashed aircraft - most came down in the mountains and in the bogs, on islands and in the sea. Out of these inaccessible places the Air Corps, with two or three salvage parties in action at the same time, worked round the clock bringing out the wreckage. Where little damage was done, the aircraft was carefully dismantled and tediously transported away, often to be flown again.

During the war a number of emergency airfields were used by the Corps. Fermoy and Navan were two of these, while from a third at Rathduff, in Tipperary, Air Corps aircraft carried out army co-op missions during the big army manoeuvres in the South of Ireland in 1942.

The Air Corps purchased 12 de navalised VS 506 Seafires LF3 for the Fighter Squadron in 1947. Serial Nos. were 146-157. The popularity of this aircraft led to the purchase of the Spitfire T.9 as advanced trainer.

The Post War Years

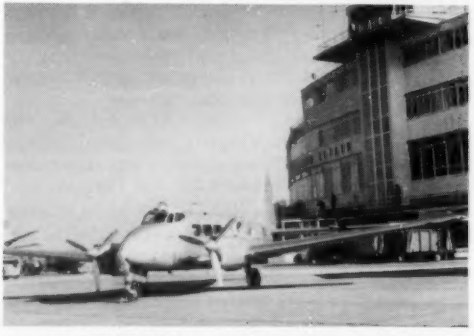
Our Hurricanes were coming to the end of their useful life in 1946, and so it became necessary to provide replacements for them. The replacements took the form of 12 Seafire aircraft which were the naval version of the Spitfire. So popular were these aircraft with our pilots that six more Spitfire trainers were purchased in 1951 to enable young pilots to be trained in the more advanced type of piston engined aircraft. These six aircraft also gave excellent service and one was still in service as late as 1961, causing much envy among the pilots of other Air Forces who visited Baldonnel from time to time. The Spitfire was probably the most popular pilots aeroplane ever built. The last of these aircraft was sold and flown out of Baldonnel in 1967.

At the end of the Emergency, many men left the service and recruiting declined for a number of years. By 1949 the Air Corps found it necessary to augment its recruitment by enlisting direct entrants to the Corps. Recruits under this scheme enlisted for six years regular service and six years on the reserve. They underwent a course of eight months practical training after which they were posted to

operational units. The scheme operated successfully for a number of years but the vast majority of recent entries have been via the conventional Apprentice Scheme.

The old reliable Miles Magisters began to be replaced in 1952 by De Haviland Chipmunks, fourteen of which were eventually purchased. These aircraft, which were the first elementary trainer to be painted all Silver, served the Air Corps faithfully for many years. Some were still in service in 1980. Percival Provosts followed the Chipmunks into service with the purchase of eight T.51's in 1954 and two T53's in 1960. The Provost replaced the Miles Master as an Advanced Trainer. It also proved a reliable and versatile aircraft. T53's of these aircraft had a light strike capability. The last of these aircraft to fly was finally grounded in 1976. The Ansons were getting old and it was decided in 1953 to purchase a De Haviland ten-seater Dove. This was the first of four Doves which were eventually purchased. They were used for twin-engined pilot training, airport landing aid calibration and transport duties. The second of these Doves, No. 188, purchased in 1959 crashed at Shannon Airport with the loss of three lives in January 1961 and was scrapped as a result. No. 176 continued flying until August 1970. No. 194 purchased in 1962 was retired in March 1978 and 201 purchased in 1970 was retired in December 1977.

A total of 14 DH Chipmunks were bought by the Air Corps to take over the basic training role from the Miles Magister in 1952. The serial Nos. were 164-175 and 199, 200 delivered in 1965.



A total of 4 DH DOVEs served with the Corps. Serial Nos. were 176 (1953), 188 (1959), 194 (1962), and 201 (1970).

The Jet Era

On 30 July 1956 three Vampire T55 jet aircraft were accepted at Hatfield, England, by Air Corps pilots. After a fifty minute flight they arrived at Baldonnel to become the first Irish jets to fly in Ireland. New concrete runways had been laid at Baldonnel a short time previously in preparation for the arrival of the Vampires. The aircraft were used as jet trainers and light strike aircraft, being equipped with 20 MM Cannons, Rockets and bomb rails. A further three aircraft were collected in 1961 which completed the equipping of the Squadron. The aircraft were equipped with ejection seats, only one of which was ever used in an emergency. Cadet R. MacPartland managed to bring the Vampire back to base, minus its canopy. The Vampires continued in service until 1976 when V191 made the last Vampire flight on 3 March of that year.

In 1951, a change in the system of recruitment of pilots was made. Hitherto, pilots had been recruited from Regular Army Officers except during the War, when three short service classes were trained. As already outlined, two of these classes were recruited for officer service and the third for NCO service. It was decided then to revive the short service officers scheme. The original classes were recruited for an initial period of three and a half years. On termination of their regular service these officers were required to serve on the reserve for a further period of seven years. In 1960, the initial period of regular service required was increased to a total of five years which could also be extended in the case of selected officers for a further two years. Facilities existed by which these officers could be absorbed by Aer Lingus at the end of their regular service, provided vacancies existed in that company for commercial airline aircrew. The vast majority of pilots recruited in this manner later transferred to Aer Lingus.

In 1960 the Congo achieved its Independence. Shortly afterwards, violence broke out and an urgent appeal for aid was sent to the United Nations. Ireland responded to the UN call by sending two battalions of troops. It was from Baldonnel that these battalions set out for active service in the Congo. On the morning of 27th July 1961, C130 Hercules type aircraft, chartered by the United Nations from the United States Air Force, began to arrive at Baldonnel to ferry out the troops. Fourdays later the last of the 32nd Battalion was on its way. In August another airlift began. This time the transport aircraft were even bigger. They were

D.H. Vampire replaced the Spitfire T9 as the advanced trainer light-strike aircraft in 1956. Three were purchased in 1956 (185-187) and 3 more in 1961 (191-193).

in fact C124 Globemasters and, again without a hitch, the 33rd Battalion was sent on its way together with its equipment and supplies. Subsequently, other battalions were to go until completion of the UN Mission in the Congo.

In 1962 arrangements were completed between the Department of Defence, Aer Lingus and the Department of Transport and Power whereby the Air Corps carried out at Gormanston the training of young pilot cadets selected by the Company. These courses, which were of twelve months duration, took the students to Commercial Licence standard. Between 1963 and 1968 forty-four pilots were trained in this manner for Aer Lingus.

The Government decided in 1962 to establish a helicopter Rescue Service to be operated by the Air Corps. Three Alouette III Helicopters equipped for air/sea rescue were purchased. The first two arrived at Baldonnel in November, 1963. The third arrived in April 1964. The first SAR mission was carried out on 23 December 1963, off the Mayo Coast, where a search was ordered for the crew of a French trawler. The crew was picked up by another trawler as the helicopter arrived on the scene.

The first actual sea rescue was performed on 8th August 1964 when a man and a boy were rescued from a drifting boat near the Kish Lightship in Dublin Bay. By 1980 513 search and rescue missions has been completed and 113 lives saved.

On the 23 February 1965 the remains of Roger Casement were flown from England to Baldonnel on a special flight by Aer Lingus, piloted by Air Corps Reserve Officers. On the 2nd March 1965 the Aerodrome was renamed Aerodrom Mhic Easmuinn.

Col. J. Fitzmaurice, who retired as OC Air Corps in 1929, paid his final visit to Baldonnel in 1964. At Baldonnel he met some of his old comrades from his serving days, including ex-Sgt. Johnny Meagher who had assisted in preparing the Bremen for its Atlantic flight. Sadly, life was not all sunshine for 'Fitz' in later years but he was helped by some good friends such as Johnny Meagher, and by Aer Lingus who were very loyal to him until the end. He died on 26 September 1965 and was given a State Funeral to Glasnevin Cemetery. Ar dheis De go raibh a ainm.

In 1965 the Air Corps took part in the making of 20th Century Fox's film 'The Blue Max'. Thirteen pilots of the Air Corps flew a total of 885 hrs. on the making of a film which was about the air war of 1914-1918. Exact replicas of German and Allied aircraft of the period were used.

In 1967 and 1968, ten pilots of the Air Corps took part in the making of Paramounts film 'Darling Lilli'. This was also about the first World War; similar aircraft were used. Air Corps pilots participated in another film 'The Red Baron' shortly after 'Darling Lilli' was completed. Three pilots, including one Air Corps pilot, a film producer and cameraman died in flying accidents during the making of these films.

In 1965 a helicopter ambulance service was undertaken as an additional task, by arrangement between the Department of Defence, the Department of Health and Local Authorities. This service involved the carriage by helicopter of special or emergency cases from hospitals throughout the country to specialist hospitals in Dublin, particularly the Neurosurgical Hospital, St. Laurences, and the National Medical Rehabilitation Centres hospital at Dun Laoghaire. Up to 1 January 1980 a total of 913 such missions had been carried out. The average annual number of ambulance missions by helicopter is 50.

The 1970's

On 23 April 1971 the DSM Class II was awarded to Comdt. B. McMahon, Sgt. A. Dunne and Cpl. J. Brady the crew of a helicopter which made a dangerous cliff rescue in a gale at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. On 22 October 1974 Capt. T. Croke, Cpl. T. Kelly and Cpl. J. Ring received the DSM Class II for the rescue of a boy from a cliff face at Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow.

On 12 April 1973 the Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave TD, unveiled a commemorative stone and plaque to mark the spot from which the Bremen departed on its historic journey. The ceremony was attended by Frau Kohl widow of Capt. Kohl. Members of Diplomatic Service, the Public Service and the Army General Staff attended, as did Col. Fitzmaurice's sister and her family.

On 17 September 1973 the Prime Minister of the U.K., Mr. Edward Heath, flew into Casement Aerodrome for a Conference on N. Ireland with Mr. Cosgrave and his Ministers. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Lynch, also attended the talks which paved the way for the Sunningdale Conference. The officers Mess was the setting for the discussions and the NCOs Mess was the scene for the subsequent press conference given by Mr. Heath.

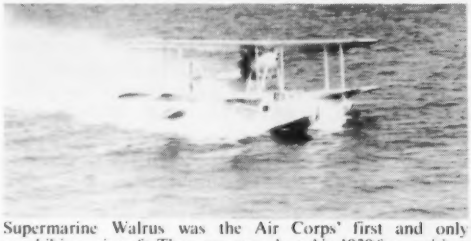
The Fouga Magister CM 170 is the Air Corps advanced trainer. Pilots graduate onto the magister after the basic course on the SF 260W. Six were bought in 1976. Nos. 215-221.

Avro 631 Cadets were delivered in 1932. 7 were bought for basic training and allotted the serials C1-C7.

The SIAI MARCHETTI SF 260 W replaced the DH Chipmunk and the Percival Provost in the training syllabus in 1977. A total of 12 have been purchased. Nos. 222-233 and 235.

HS 125-700 was purchased in 1979 for inter European V.I.P. Flights. The range of the aircraft allows it to fly, for example, non stop from Dublin to Athens, with full reserves of fuel. (Photo: Robert Allen).

Alouette III (SA316B) was the first rotary-wing type operated by the Air Corps. Three, (195, 196, 197) were purchased in 1963/64 and since then they have been added to so that now there are a total of eight. Role includes search and rescue, Army Co-op, Recce, Air Ambulance and light logistics.



Supermarine Walrus was the Air Corps' first and only amphibious aircraft. Three were purchased in 1939 for maritime Patrol and served until 1945 when N.18 was sold to Aer Lingus as E1-ACC. Serial Nos. were N.18, N.19, N.20.

The Air Corps purchased eight Cessna FR 172H for reconnaissance and liaison in 1972. Serial Nos. are 203-210 and are based in Gormanston, Co. Meath.

SA 342L Gazelle was purchased in 1979. The Gazelles role is pilot conversion and instrument flying.

The Air Corps figured again in North/South relations when on 14 January 1974 the Chief Executive of the N.I. Assembly, Mr. B. Faulkner, visited Casement for discussions there with An Taoiseach and other Government Ministers. A return visit by Mr. Cosgrave and his Ministers to N. Ireland was made in February when the Party travelled to Hillsboro and returned in three Air Corps Helicopters.

In October 1972 the Air Corps took delivery of eight new Cessna FR 172 H's from Rheims in France. These aircraft were principally used for co-operation with other army units and over the years they proved very suitable for that purpose. The year 1972 also saw the addition of a fourth Alouette III Helicopter (H. 202) to bring the total helicopter strength to four machines. A fifth Alouette III joined the fleet in February 1973 (211) and a sixth in March 1973 (212). Finally H213 arrived in December 1973 and H214 in March 1974, bringing the total fleet to eight aircraft at which level it remained steady for several years. These helicopters were used for a wide variety of military and humanitarian purposes.

With the gradual phasing out of the T MK 55 Vampires in the early seventies, a decision was taken to purchase six CM 170 Fouga Super Magisters from Aerospatiale France. These aircraft were refurbished to French Air Force standards and the contract for re-equipping the avionic systems was given to Aer Lingus Teo. After some initial pilot and technician training in France the first two aircraft F215 and 216 arrived at Casement Aerodrome flown by Air Corps Pilots from Chateauroux on the 11 September 1975. Fougas 217 and 218 arrived on 15 February 1976 and 219 and 220 arrived from Bordeaux on 13 November 1976. These aircraft went into service as light-strike and advanced trainer aircraft shortly after their arrival. Aer Lingus carried out avionic refits on all six aircraft. A crashed French Air Force Fouga was presented to the Air Corps by the French Air Force for Apprentice training and was given the Serial No. 221.

The Chipmunks and Provosts having now reached the end of their useful careers in the Air Corps the decision was taken to replace them with SF 260W SIAI Marchetti's from Italy. Again, after some initial pilot and technician training in Italy, the first four aircraft W221, 222, 223 and 224 were collected from Vergiate Italy, and arrived at Casement on 4 March 1977. The remaining six aircraft were collected in April. The aircraft arrived fully equipped with avionics to Air Corps specifications. While their main function was that of primary trainer the aircraft carried a light strike capability.

A fishery protection role in conjunction with the Naval Service was suddenly thrust on the Air Corps in 1977. To cope with this a Beech Super King Air 200 was leased by the Air Corps for a three year period commencing in April 1977. This aircraft which was leased from United Beech Scandanavia, through their Irish agents, was the 262nd aircraft to go into service with the Air Corps and was given the serial No. 232. Four pilots were given some initial training in the United States as part of the leasing contract. On the 17th August 1978 a second Beech Super King Air 200 was leased from the same supplier for fishery protection duties. It was given the Air Corps No. 234. Under the terms of the leases both aircraft retained their original civilian colour schemes during their service in the Air Corps. In December 1979 both 232 and 234 were purchased by the Dept. of Defence as an interim provision for the fishery protection role.

On the 25th January 1978, Marchetti 224 crashed on landing during a pupil training flight at Casement. The aircraft was damaged beyond repair but the pupil was unhurt. On the 21st September, 1978, Cessna 204 crashed in the Shannon Estuary while on a bird counting operation for the Forest and Wildlife Service of the Dept. of Fisheries. The pilot, Lt. G. O'Sullivan and observer, Mr. O'Merne, managed to swim to shore suffering from minor injuries. The aircraft was subsequently recovered and boarded for scrap.

A Military Airstrip at Finner, Co. Donegal was opened by the Minister for Defence in February, 1978.

On 21 January 1979 the Minister for Defence, Mr. R. Molloy, presented Distinguished Service Medals to three helicopter crews for some outstanding efforts of search and rescue. The first of these rescues involved two crews and took place at Muckish Mountain, Co. Donegal on 1 August 1979. Two people were rescued for which DSMs were presented to Comdt. P. O'Shea, Class I; Capt. D. Loughnane, Class II; Sgt. W. Byrne, Class I; Airman O. Sherry, Class I; Airman R. O'Sullivan, Class III. For the rescue of two men from a cliff face in Glendalough, DSMs were awarded to Comdt. P. O'Shea, Class II; Ex-Sgt. R. Murray, Class II; and Airman D. Byrne, Class II.

The last year of the decade was marked by the visit of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Ireland for the Knock Centenary Celebrations. Both the Army and the Air Corps were closely involved in the preparations leading up to the visit and during the actual visit itself. Four Fouga Magisters escorted the Papal Boeing 747 into Dublin. Marchetti aircraft provided aerial security during open air events and movement of the Pope by IHL Helicopter. Beech aircraft, flying at altitude, provided communication links for the same periods. Air Corps helicopters flew security and VIP missions. Cessna aircraft carried out photographic and security duties. Puma helicopters, leased from the German Bundes Gren Schutz (Border Police), by the Gardai escorted the

Papal helicopter on its journeys. Air Corps pilots acted as navigators on these Pumas during the visit. Military Air Traffic Control provided Controllers, and Air Sqn. Signals provided radio equipment for these ATC stations at the sites of the Papal ceremonies. The Air Corps provided fuel for all helicopters at Knock who required it. Every unit of the Air Corps was fully stretched for the three days of the visit. As a gesture of appreciation the Pope presented a Rosary to Signalman Paul Behan of Air Squadron Signals who operated a radio at a Galway landing site.

Air Corps personnel have served as Air LO's Observers, Photographers, Signal Operators, Cooks and Line personnel in the Congo, Middle-East, Cyprus and are among those presently on peace keeping duties in South Lebanon since June 1978.

Recent Developments

In May 1979 a Hawker Siddeley 125/600 was leased to transport Government Ministers and Officials travelling to Europe on business. This was a temporary measure pending the purchase of a more up-to-date version of HS 125. The first aircraft leased was No. 236 and in November this aircraft was damaged when take-off was aborted due to birds on the runway. A replacement 125/600 aircraft was supplied and given the serial number 239. In February 1980 a HS 125/700 was delivered and went into service immediately replacing No. 239 which was returned to British Aerospace. The new 125/700 was given the serial number 238.

In December 1979, Helicopter Squadron took delivery of an SA 342 L Aerospatiale Gazelle Helicopter from France. This aircraft, which is due to be joined by a second in 1980, will be used for basic helicopter flying training, including training for instrument and night flying.

The advent of new and sophisticated aircraft equipped with modern aids, and the frequent use of Casement by VIPs, created pressures to modernise the airfield facilities. Work commenced in 1979 to bring landing and ground aids up to modern standards. The programme is under the supervision of Aer Rianta who are the consultants, and the actual work is being carried out by the ESB, the Post Office and other contractors.

The Air Corps is constantly engaged in a wide variety of training and operational tasks, the number of which has increased in the past decade. The more important of these tasks are air support of ground forces, search and rescue; fishery protection in cooperation with the Naval Service; transport of Government Ministers and Officials to Europe; aerial and ground photography; air ambulance missions; aid to the Civil Power, and Pilot, Technician and Recruit training. The aircraft currently available for carrying out the flying tasks are Alouette and Gazelle helicopters, Fouga Magisters, SIAI Marchetti SF 260 Warriors, Cessna FRH 172s, Beech SKA 200s and a HS 125/700, the last two types being twin-engined aircraft. These aircraft may be joined in 1980 by a troop-carrying helicopter which would extend the Air Corps capability to assist the ground forces as well as enhancing the search and rescue capability. The possible use of helicopters in support of our Naval Forces is also being examined.

The training of Pilots, Technicians and more recently, Recruits, occupies the major part of Air Corps training resources. While other categories also receive various forms of training such as Air Traffic Controllers and Signallers, it is the training of Pilots, Apprentices and Recruits which makes the heaviest demands on available personnel, equipment and time.

Pilots are recruited either as Cadets or Commissioned Officers. The Cadet course leading to 'Wings' now takes approximately two years, including time spent on military training in the Military College. The 'Wings' Course for commissioned officers usually lasts about eighteen months. After 'Wings' pilots are posted to operational Units where they convert on to operational types and consolidate their flying experience before becoming operational. Suitable pilots are selected for flying instructors courses depending on requirements. All pilots are required to remain in the Air Corps for ten years from the date they receive their 'Wings'.

The Apprenticeship Scheme for technician training continues to operate satisfactorily. Apprentices enlist for nine years regular service and three years on the first line reserve. About forty apprentices enter the scheme each year. After two years full-time training in technical and military subjects apprentices who qualify are assigned to operational units where, with further experience, they qualify as Class II and later Class I Aircraft Mechanics. Suitable men are selected to undergo Pot NCO Courses to qualify them for promotion. The Apprentice Scheme is recognised by AnCO, the Apprentice Training Authority.

Recruits entering the Army for general service may be assigned to the Air Corps where they undertake various duties. Some of these are Drivers, Firemen, Clerks, Storemen, Cooks, SAR and Gen-purpose Helicopter Aircrew, Stewards, Waiters, Parachute packers, Carpenters, Medical Orderlies, Tailors, Barbers, Photographers and Draughtsmen. Promotions to NCO rank depend on the passing of necessary courses and vacancies being available.

It is envisaged that the 1956 Establishment for the Air Corps will shortly be superseded by a new Establishment which will take account of the many changes that have overtaken the Air Corps in the intervening years. In the new organisation the Officer Commanding becomes the General Officer Commanding with the rank of Brigadier General. The

Corps headquarters consists of the GOC and a small staff. The remainder of the Corps is grouped under a Group Commander of Colonel rank. This new Group is sub divided into Wings, each having its own particular organisation and function. These Wings are called Training Wing, Nos. 1 and 2 Support Wings, Engineering Wing, Administrative Wing and each is commanded by a Lt. Colonel. The title of each Wing indicates the purpose or task for which it has been structured. "Support" of course refers to assistance to the ground forces and the Naval service. The present air element in Gormanston becomes No. 2 Support Wing. The changed structure will, it is hoped, streamline the organisation making it better fitted to carry out its tasks and responsibilities. New promotional outlets will be created, thus improving career prospects for present and future personnel serving there. This applies to all ranks whether associated with flying or non flying activities, and the benefits will, it is hoped, be widespread.

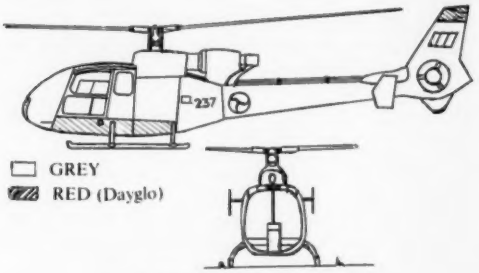
Drogue & Chute

2/Lt. J. Duffy

AIR Corps Station, Gormanston is called on to provide aircraft for many wide and varied tasks. Among those tasks are such things as Army/Garda Co-Operation, Radar training and calibration, parachuting, bird and seal counting, target towing for ground to air firing, sea searches, air displays and, finally, pilot continuation training.

Each year the Unit provides aircraft for the purpose of towing an aerial target for firing practices carried out by the various AA units. A tow winch is fitted to the aircraft with a Missed Distance Indicator and a Drogue Chute attached. The M.D.I. is electronically operated and gives an indication to the firing Battery how close a round has passed to it. During the exercise the Drogue is released from the aircraft using the winch and a steel cable. The target is extended 1000m behind the aircraft before firing may commence. The system is used for both Bofors and GMPG firing.

Two aircraft, R209 and R206 have been modified for parachute jumping. During the first military parachute course in 1979 these aircraft were used with great success. A total of 14 sorties were flown with a flying time of 16 hrs. All available pilots were involved in the flying giving them valuable experience. Unfortunately, because of poor weather conditions, jumping was only possible on five days during the two week period, resulting in the number of jumps carried out being less than originally hoped for. During Summer aircraft from Gormanston attend a number of Air Displays around the country. The aircraft, usually 4 in number, display formation flying in its various forms. Appearances have been made at Displays in Abbeyshrule and Farranfore.



GAZELLE 342L

Sgt. J. Parke, TTS.

THE Air Corps have recently taken delivery of one Aerospatiale Gazelle 342 helicopter. Air Corps Number 237 - Const. No. 1772.

It is designed to carry five people and to meet the requirements of a light observation helicopter and a trainer.

The Gazelle 342L is an extension of the 341 definition. It differs from the latter by an increase in performance. This is due to the replacement of the ASTAZOU 111 engine by the more powerful ASTAZOU 14H and also by an improvement in "Fenestron" (Shrouded Tail Rotor) efficiency. The first prototype Gazelle made its first flight on April 7th 1968 and up to 1975 six hundred and sixty Gazelles have been sold to sixty five operators in twenty countries.

A two seater ambulance configuration is also possible in the Gazelle. No major modification is necessary to convert the aircraft to carry two patients longitudinally on the port side of the cabin, one above the other leaving room for the pilot and a medical attendent on the starboard side.

The Air Corps Gazelle is not an armed version but with extensive modification it could be equipped with a wide variety of weapon systems.

The engineering side of the helicopter makes full use of the advances made in composite material construction.

The three main rotor blades, which are fully foldable are made of glass fibre and resin laminates and are extremely strong and flexible. They can take much more punishment than a helicopter blade of more conventional manufacture such as fitted to the Alouette 111. The main body structure of the helicopter is constructed from glass fibre with a honeycomb filler. This is very strong and also of less weight than the more usual welded tube construction. The tail section of the helicopter is fitted with a fin and a 'FENESTRON'. This is a thirteen bladed anti torque shrouded fan, the blades of which are made of light alloy and there is articulation for pitch change only.

The advantages of a Fenestron are twofold: (i) Safety to ground personnel as the tail rotor is

shrouded. (ii) It produces less drag than a conventional tail rotor and consequently enhances the high speed performance of the aircraft.

The landing gear of the Gazelle is of the steel tube skid type. Wheels can be fitted at the rear of each skid for ground handling purposes. There is also provision for alternative "FLOAT" or "SKI" landing gear to be fitted.

A cargo hook can be installed when required. A rescue winch is also available as an optional fitting. However the small cabin size of the Gazelle renders it unsuitable for the Sea Air Rescue role.

The helicopter is powered by an ASTAZOU 14H turboshaft installed above the fuselage aft of the cabin and delivering about 440 Kilo Watts of power at 43,000 RPM at sea level.

The Gazelle also introduces to the Air Corps the concept of "On Condition" maintenance. This has the advantage of increasing the flying hours by reducing its ground service time.

A number of Air Corps Pilots trained at the Aerospatiale Flying training school in Marseille, France, and some technicians have completed a three week maintenance course with Aerospatiale and a further one week study of the power plant with Turbomeca, the engine manufacturer, in Bayonne, France.

Air Corps Gazelle 237 is at the moment engaged on pilot conversion courses, basic helicopter flying training, and, in the future, advanced training of operational pilots for all weather Instrument Flight Rules operations is planned, for the possible operation of large helicopters.

MAX. SPEED	*190mph*
MAX. CRUISE SPEED	*165mph*
CEILING	*4,650 Metres*
NO. of PAX	*2+3.*

(Continued from page 150)

The rescue of the second climber, the young lady, was even more difficult. She was closer still to the face of the cliff - wedged in a rock crevice and too scared to move a muscle. Yet, the three crew-men made it look simple, pilot winch man and winch operator. Apparently it was thought advisable not to take the girl on board until the craft was in a safe position, and so we saw the spectacular sight of the helicopter slowly rising above the view lines of the summit, the girl dangling some twenty feet below, and all clearly defined by the unerring aim of the Finner craft.

Soon everyone was safely on the ground - the whole operation having taken about 15 minutes.

We heartily welcomed the rescued back to safety; but the uppermost thought in my mind and in the minds of the many locals who by this time had gathered, was admiration and respect for those experts of the air who with their machines had possibly saved the lives, or at least averted the real possibility of two people suffering a nights exposure on the cold and wind swept face of Muckish.

(Continued from page 145)

maintain an expeditious flow of both civil and military air traffic. The military radar controller can also provide radar let downs through cloud and positioning onto final approach to runways at Casement Aerodrome to any air traffic under his control.

Air Traffic Control in 1979 handled upwards on 20,000 aircraft movements at Military Aerodromes. The introduction of more modern aircraft in recent years means that military controllers are handling faster aircraft requiring stricter control discipline and continuous up-dating of procedures. To meet this changing demand it is policy to send controllers on courses from time to time to the Institute of Air Navigation, Eurocontrol, in Luxembourg and the Control ATC School at Hurn in the U.K. These courses extend to military controllers the opportunity to work and train in the most sophisticated control environment and to meet and exchange ideas with controllers, both civil and military, from other countries.

Basic air traffic control courses for trainee controllers are conducted at Casement Aerodrome and this is additional work for controllers. Courses consist six months classroom work and tower training, followed by another six months on the job, training under supervision. These controller positions are open to Officer's and suitably qualified NCO's when vacancies occur. NCO's on satisfactory completion of the course are eligible for promotion to the rank of Flight Sergeant.

The work of airtraffic controllers does not always keep them in the comfort of their control towers. In recent years controllers have operated as forward air controllers with air support elements on Brigade Exercises and other security operations.

The most extensive operation in which Air Traffic Control has been involved in recent times was the visit of Pope John Paul II. In addition to providing normal services at Casement Aerodrome and Gormanstown, Air Traffic Control were also required to provide controllers at all locations on the Papal itinerary. These locations were:-

Papal Nunciature, Phoenix Park, Drogheda, Galway, Carnmore, Knock, Maynooth, Clonmacnoise and Limerick.

Due to the small staff it was necessary for some controllers to leap frog from one location to another. The whole exercise proved to be a tiring but enlighting experience.

Air Traffic Control in the seventies has been in a state of constant change. Control procedures have been continuously updated to meet the demands of more modern and faster aircraft and to keep procedures in line with Civil and military International Standards.

The control towers at Casement Aerodrome and Gormanston have been completely reequipped with up to date communications facilities. Casement Aerodrome is currently in the middle of an airfield renovation programme. To date the airfield lighting has been updated, approach lights have been fitted on the approaches to three runways. Visual approach slope indicater system's (VASIS'S) have also been fitted on three runways. This system aids the pilot in judging his glide slope on the approach to a runway.

The updating is continuing in the eighties with the installation this year of VOR/DME. In 1981 it is planned to install an airfield radar. This will enable controllers to carry out approaches to runways to a lower height than is currently possible.

These improvements will ensure that the airfield and Air Traffic Control conform to International Civil and Military Standards going into the eighties, and are in a position to provide the best possible service to all aircraft.

Defence Forces Army Athletics Fixtures

Athletics	Belfield	21 June
Chaplains Cup Final	Curragh Training Camp	16 June
Medical Service Cup Final	Curragh Training Camp	17 June
Defence Forces Golf	Castle Golf Club	29/30 June & 1 July

SA 342L Gazelle.

Alouette III.

Percival Provost T53

SF 260

D.H. Vampire.

CM 170 Magister.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Lt. R. Cummins Mil. ATC.

THE Army in the last decade has been the subject of a lot of public attention. This is primarily due to the ever changing role it finds itself playing in state security and partly due to the increasing media coverage of its affairs. This publicity has been very obvious in the Air Corps. Almost everyone has seen or read about Helicopter Sqd. in operation in one sphere or other. Air Corps Fougas made their mark worldwide when they escorted Pope John Paul II on his arrival in Ireland. Our Fishery Protection aircraft and VIP Aircraft are common sights around our coasts and the airports of Europe.

There are sections of the Air Corps however, which contribute their fair share to the workload of the Air Corps which the majority of people have little knowledge of.

The Air Traffic Control Section is one of these. Air Traffic Control is an integral part of any modern airfield and the operation of any such field would be greatly impaired without it.

The policy of Air Traffic Control in the Air Corps is to provide:

1. *A service which will enable pilots of military aircraft to operate safely with tactical freedom in all weather conditions, taking into consideration individual pilot ratings and approach minima for available navigational aids.*
2. *Provide a Flight Information Service.*
3. *Alert emergency services and initiate search and rescue action when required.*
4. *Meet such other requirements ad determined from time to time by the General Officer commanding the Air Corps.*

To achieve these objectives, therefore Air Traffic Control must:

1. *Prevent collisions between aircraft in the air and on the ground.*
2. *Maintain an orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic.*
3. *Provide advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of a flight.*
4. *Notify the appropriate organisation of aircraft in need of search and rescue assistance.*

To provide this service Air Traffic Control has a present establishment of sixteen, manning control towers at Casement Aerodrome Air Station, Gormanston and the Military Radar position in the Air Traffic Control Centre at Dublin Airport.

The control towers at Casement Aerodrome and Gormanston are divided into two main areas for the purpose of providing control to aircraft, the towers control area and the approach control area.

The Tower controller is responsible for controlling traffic flying under visual conditions in the circuit in the vicinity of the airfield and on the airfield. Information and instructions will be given to aircraft under his control to achieve a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic and to assist in preventing collisions between:-

a. Aircraft flying in the airfield circuit area
b. Aircraft moving on the airfield
c. Aircraft landing and taking off
d. Aircraft and obstructions on the airfield.

The tower controller is also responsible for:-

a. The control of all vehicles and pedestrian traffic on the airfield.
b. Airfield and lighting inspections and notifying aircraft of any irregularity.
c. Alerting, dispatching and control of safety services.

The tower controller is also responsible for:-

a. Selection of the runway to be used for take off's and landings.
b. Coordinating all traffic leaving or joining his zone with the approach controller.

The Approach Controller is responsible for:-

a. All aircraft operating outside the airfield air traffic zone and in the Military Air exercise Area on his frequency.
b. These aircraft can be operating either visually having contact with the ground at all times, or above cloud.
c. When the aircraft are operating above cloud the controller is responsible for providing separation between each aircraft. This separation is normally 1,000 ft. vertically or 5 miles horizontally.
d. To assist the controller in provision of this separation he has, in addition to normal Radio Communications, a Direction Finder. The Direction Finder is activated by the aircrafts radio transmissions and provides the controller with magnetic bearings of the aircraft to the airfield.
e. When an aircraft operating in or above cloud requires to descend through cloud back to the airfield the approach controller can give the aircraft, with the assistance of the Direction Finder, a controlled descent through cloud and position the aircraft to a point from where he can see the airfield.

The approach controller is also responsible for:-

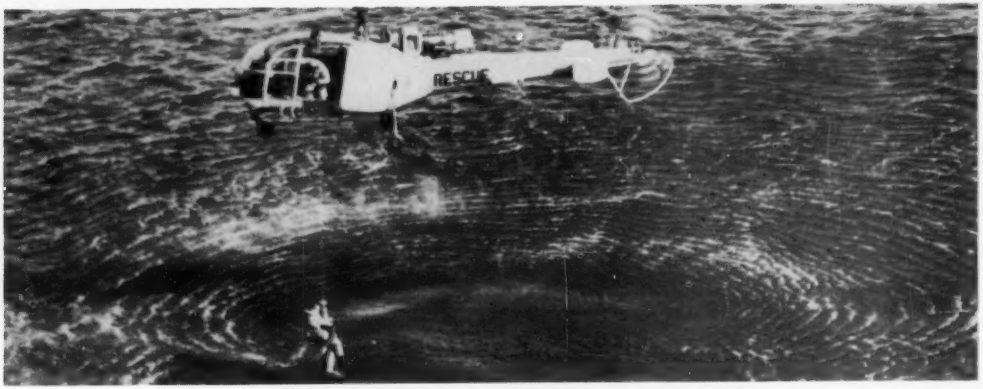
a. Providing all aircraft under his control with up to date information on all civil air traffic which may affect them.
b. Provide any other information which may be relevant to a particular aircrafts operation.

By the end of 1980 Casement Aerodrome will be equipped with a new approach and navigation aid, a VOR/DME. This is a pilot interpreted navigational aid which provides the pilot, by virtue of an instrument in his cockpit, with continuous information on his bearing and distance from the airfield. With clearance and information from Air Traffic Control the pilot can carry out his own descent and positioning onto final approach for a particular runway. This aid will allow pilots of aircraft to operate to lower weather. These procedures will conform to procedures recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Because of the proximity of Casement Aerodrome and Gormanston to Dublin Airport direct telephone and intercom links are provided between each centre for the purpose of coordinating civil and military Air Traffic.

Air Traffic Control is also responsible for providing an Aeronautical Information Service to pilots. This service includes providing information on serviceability of airfields, fire services, navigation aids and any other information which may be considered relevant to the safe conduct of a flight. It also has responsibility for maintaining and amending all aeronautical manuals and publications which provide pilots with the information required for all international flights. Air Traffic Control also has responsibility for flight plans and all military traffic which intend to enter civil airspace. Coordination of civil and military Air Traffic is one of the prime functions of the Military Radar controller at Dublin Airport. To assist him with this function he has the use of a radar with a coverage of 80 miles. Because the radar controller works in the same room as the civil controllers he is in a position to make quick decisions to

(continued on page 143)



SEARCH AND RESCUE

Capt. J. J. Kirke Air Corps HQ.

"Hello 592493? . . . climber injured . . . cliff face . . . Glendalough . . . Request helicopter immediately."

Each year at least one major search and rescue operation attains National if not International recognition. Last year was the Fastnet Boat Race and the Whiddy Island Disaster; this year the North Sea catastrophe - others have included mountain rescues and light aircraft crashes. The techniques used in these operations have evolved over the years since the first dedicated Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter unit in these Islands was established by the Royal Navy at Lee-on-Solent in 1951.

This Unit, 705 Squadron, pioneered most of the present day techniques and equipment and has to its credit, for instance, the invention of the standard rescue strop by one of its crew members in the early '50s.

Since then helicopters have got bigger, faster and better equipped. The SAR helicopter now embraces types ranging from the Westland Wessex, Bell 212, to Sikorsky S-61 Seaking, SA 330 Puma and to-date in our own case the Alouette III.

The Search and Rescue services in Ireland are provided in accordance with ICAO standards and recommended practices. The Search and Rescue Area, the centre of which operates in close conjunction with the Air Traffic Control (ATC) Services, is co-extensive with the Shannon ATC Flight Information Region (FIR). The Rescue Control Centre (RCC), both for marine and aviation, is at Shannon Airport with a sub-centre at Dublin Airport.

Normally all calls for assistance are passed through these centres. The task of the centre is to co-ordinate all SAR forces to (i) achieve the most effective use of all available resources in incidents involving civil and military aircraft, whether national or foreign; (ii) to provide a control and communications link between the various rescue agencies; (iii) to co-ordinate the air aspect of search and rescue operations (SAROps) with other RCC's, national or foreign. Shannon R.C.C. is responsible for initiating and co-ordinating SAR Ops within the Shannon FIR but dependent on circumstances may (i) request SAR assistance from the UK SAR organisation, retaining co-ordination of such operation or (ii) request the UK SAR organisation for assistance and to assume the co-ordination responsibility as well. It may also delegate responsibility to Dublin Sub-centre.

Requests for assistance normally come from ATC centres or foreign RCC's. Direct requests from police, health authorities, other rescue agencies, and the general public are also accepted. The RCC, over the years, have used their expertise to co-ordinate most types of rescue work from missing persons to major maritime disasters.

Most maritime rescues are inshore. In the case of a swimmer or sailing dinghy in trouble the SAR crews may be informed direct by local sources, the duty crew would then go to the task, and the RCC would then be informed of the operation. The organisation has to be this flexible.

The Air Corps is the only agency in the Aviation field in this country with a direct commitment to SAR. At Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, there is a duty crew and helicopter available 24 hours a day for SAR Ops. A Beech SKA 200 can also be made available for search purposes.

The crew of the Alouette III consists of pilot, winch operator and winch man. At least one of the crew will be trained in First Aid having undergone an Ambulance Course with the Civil Defence and gained practical experience in city hospitals and Fire Brigade units.

All Pilots involved in Helicopter Squadron have completed the "Wings" course on SF 260W and

Fouga Magister. After "Wings" they normally are posted for a further year to another fixed-wing unit to gain experience. Then they may be selected for Helicopter Conversion. This consists of 60 hrs. Basic flying on SA 342L Gazelle and 40 hrs. operational training on SA 316B Alouette III. When they complete the course they do not go immediately on SAR Ops but operate in the other roles assigned to the Squadron, e.g. Army & Garda Co-op, Air Ambulance, Ferry Flights etc. to build up experience. When they are considered to have built up enough experience after approximately 2 years, they then are rostered for SAR duties.

The course for crewmen is of eight weeks duration and has a failure rate of approx. 50 per cent. This is because some students find difficulty in assessing situations quickly and being able to communicate what must be done and what is happening to the pilot who cannot see for himself what is going on. Winching training takes up a large proportion of the time-table, an indication of how difficult the task is - it just looks easy. Trying to face the survivor on the approach when "on the wire" is quite difficult in itself. The Winchman is also signalling the Winch Operator for more or less cable and simultaneously assessing the situation and planning what to do when he reaches the survivor. Add a few obstacles of the type commonly encountered on a ship - masts, stays, aerials and deck fittings - and the task becomes, to say the least, exacting.

Dry winching (i.e. survivor on land) is first taught starting on level ground and becoming increasingly difficult as the course progresses. The same procedure is also used in wet winching.

Deck winching includes winching with the boat underway and with the boat drifting. The prevailing sea states and wind conditions sometimes preclude the boat and helicopter heading in the same direction. This is where the winch operator's skills in communication are essential.

Tape winching, in which an extra length of nylon tape is attached to the winch cable, is one of the most demanding exercises. With the extra length of line the Alouette's cable is increased from 80 ft. to almost 200 ft. Anything but ultra-smooth handling by all the crew including the winchman, will magnify any tendency for the winchman to pendulum. On 200 ft. of cable this can be dangerous for all concerned. Both winchman and winch operator are interchangeable and the SAR equipped helicopter carries an SAR bag as part of the equipment. This contains the strops, harnesses, tapes, grabbit hooks needed for most situations as well as wire cutters and First Aid equipment etc. The winchman's double-lift harness allows him to assume a sitting position, hands free, when on the wire which is itself weighted with approx. 2 lbs. lead. The harness itself is a "bosun's chair" type with adjusting straps over the thighs and shoulders. A quick release box connects the harness to the hook on the winch cable. The rescue strop is a padded nylon loop which is worn with the pad around the middle of the back and under the arms. A double lift is always used whenever possible. All signals to the winch operator from the winchman are given by hand - a palm up movement from the horizontal arm position meaning up, a side to side 'chopping' motion meaning hold position and a palm downward 'pushing' motion meaning lower cable.

The winch operator directs the pilot into position overhead and operates the cable. There is a formal training circuit - left-hand pattern with crosswind, downwind, base leg and final approach. (The reason for the left-hand pattern is that the door is on the port side of the a/c - on the side away from the pilot). The Winchman talks the pilot around giving him the position of the survivor in clockcode, the condition of the casualty e.g. drifting boat, and the kind of lift he intends doing. As the pilot turns on to the 12 o'clock position he indicates when he has the casualty in sight and the winch operator starts to call off the range in units. The winch operator's patter begins at 100 units and the pilot begins a descent aiming to be at winching height by about 30 units. This height is maintained all the way in, coming to the hover as the aircraft comes in over the stern of the boat; the winchman has already started his descent on the cable. The perfect approach will result in the winchman touching down within about a yard of the survivor as the helicopter comes into the hover, into wind whenever possible.

Military aircrew can be picked up by the grabbit hook. This is a simple snap-lock hook which is passed through the special lifting loops on military specification lifejackets. Another standard item of equipment is the Paraguard stretcher. This is a collapsible lightweight stretcher designed to immobilise seriously injured survivors. This is carried on the winchman's back and does not interfere with his movements on the wire. Oxygen, splints, bandages, rescuscitation equipment are also carried in the helicopter SAR bag. Depending on circumstances, a 10-man dinghy and personal survival dinghies are carried by the crew.

Let us assume a cliff climber has survived a fall and a helicopter is called for. Transit to the scene, as usual, will be flown at maximum cruise speed, a full power check having been done on take-off from base. On arrival at the scene the pilot and crew will reconnoitre the casualty's position allowing the crew to check wind velocity, survivor's position, turbulence level, obstructions, updraughts or downdraughts etc. They will also decide on the type of lift to be used e.g. double or stretcher lift and also the pilot will determine an escape route to be used should the helicopter develop a fault. Whenever possible the aircraft will be hovered into wind and in the updraught to give maximum power reserve.

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When the casualty is either in the stretcher or strop and ready to be lifted the helicopter is moved to the vertical position overhead. The winch operator then winches in the slack cable and gives the signal to the pilot who then lifts the winchman and the casualty by climbing slightly. Then the winchman and survivor are winched up to the door and assisted into the helicopter by the winch operator. First aid is applied where needed and an injuries report made for onwards transmission to the hospital en route.

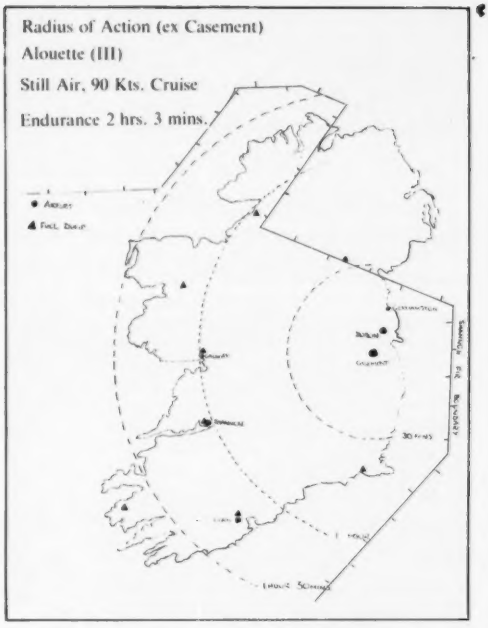
All cliff rescues employ similar techniques but maintaining a steady hover is more difficult because mountain airstreams are more turbulent and unpredictable.

As already stated, the Helicopter Squadron keeps one helicopter and crew on immediate readiness during daylight hours. The Alouette III can be airborne within 5 mins. Night rescues are not normally undertaken but weather conditions permitting a positioning flight could be undertaken to facilitate a dawn rescue. The reason for this is that the Alouette is not equipped for hovering at night without visual references, over open sea. The larger, more modern types of helicopter have this type of equipment and can practically operate around the clock e.g. North Sea Rig Disaster in March.

The crews do a 24 hour duty available at all times in the Squadron building, with the aircraft flight checked every morning, preflighted and set up for a quick start-up. When a call comes in the pilot gets an immediate brief on the situation and compiles a rudimentary flight plan to the area. As this country is not very large the pilot knows his distance and ETA's and may actually be familiar with the area. Start-up takes approx. 3 mins. and then is ready for lift off.

Transit out of the airfield is usually below 300' to avoid circuit traffic. En route to the incident the pilot briefs the crew and a likely course of action is planned and the necessary equipment prepared. Any further updating of the situation can be passed to the pilot by Air Traffic Control.

Cliff and mountain rescue work bring their own special problems and techniques. To begin with, the location of survivors is not as easy as it would seem. Serious climbers and hill-walkers usually tell some one where they intend to climb and what time they expect to return. If they have an accident locating them is much easier as long as they stick to their route plan. The "day tripper" who decides, on the spur of the moment perhaps, to go for a stroll in the hills, poses many problems. First of all no one may know that he is missing. If he is missed no one may know where to start looking and time is of the essence. Most casual walkers of this kind are not dressed or prepared for spending a night on the mountains. Due to combinations of air temperature, altitude, and wind chill factor the possibility of death from hypothermia is high.



The Air Corps first received their helicopters in 1964 when owing to a very severe winter in 1963 the need for helicopters for rescue and mountain relief missions was recognised. Three Alouette IIIs arrived from France and since then they have been added to until to-day the Corps has eight Alouette IIIs and one SA 342L Gazelle. The Alouettes have given sterling service over the past seventeen years, in all configurations from SAR to Army Co-operation Missions, Air Ambulance, Troop carrying, Island Relief, Training, Cargo Slinging VIP Ferry Flights - the list is practically endless. However, due to the nature of operations and the forthcoming trends in both the military and civil spheres of operations the aircraft are rapidly becoming obsolescent. The huge strides that have been taken, particularly in the field of Flight Systems, Navigation Systems not to mention Helicopter Technology itself, mean that the Alouette will have to be replaced in the next few years if the Helicopter Squadron is to keep its operational capability at a realistic level. (The A1 III is now the oldest machine on Air Corps current strength). Up to now this country has relied on RAF Seakings to supply long range Search and Rescue cover for the Atlantic.

A Sea King operating from Brawdy in South Wales has a radius of action that covers up to eighty miles off the West Coast. If however it has to operate further out he has to refuel at Shannon thereby incurring a time loss and time is always an important factor in SAR missions. Pilots and crew

of the Helicopter Squadron have on occasion (and at considerable risk to themselves) gone out 70+ nautical miles to take seriously injured personnel off ships. This is always done with "top cover" i.e. an RAF Nimrod maritime patrol in a visual contact all the way, and supplying course and steering information from its Radar to the Helicopter. Distances of this nature mean that the winchman has less than half an hour to get the casualty into the stretcher and up on deck to the winching area - despite the rolling ship, confined spaces and frequently a non-English speaking crew. If he is not ready for winching in the time allotted the pilot has no option but to leave him and return to base. Thankfully this has not yet happened.

An indication of the professionalism and determination of the crews is that the Squadron has had no fewer than 14 members decorated for their efforts in Rescue operations - 3 DSMs Class I, ten DSMs Class II and one DSM Class III - a record to be proud of.

Finally, may the Squadron's next seventeen years be as successful as the last and continue the excellent service they give both to the PDF and the community at large.

MUCKISH RESCUE

Fr. T. Roche, OFM.

ON the evening of August 1st 1977 word came to our Priory at Ard Mhuire, Creeslough, that three people were trapped on Muckish Mountain. We received the story with a certain amount of disbelief, as to my knowledge no one had ever been in difficulties on the mountain before. After some time however, Bro. Richard and I decided to approach the Mountain lest there be any truth in the rumour.

It was a bright sunny evening, about 8 p.m., and we drove to within a half mile of the regular climb starting point. Where we stood, on the West foothills of Muckish, the mountainside spread before us - maybe a mile or so in length and 1700 ft. above was the table, Muckish is a plateau shaped mountain. To locate the position of the callers was not going to be easy.

At this point we were about 1,000 feet up, and the Summit a further 1,100 feet above us. Somewhere in that 1100 feet lay the trapped climbers. As Bro. Richard climbed we kept constant vocal and visible contact. Finally, after climbing approximately 1000 feet Bro. Richard established visible and vocal contact with the man and young woman. They were stuck on one of the steepest cliff-faces of the entire mountain, unable to ascend or descend., I told Bro. Richard to remain exactly where he was; to use his handkerchief as a signal, and that I would return to the nearest phone and summon help.

Just as I reached the foot of the mountain a helicopter of the Air Corps based at Finner landed beside me. They had been alerted by the third climber who managed to scramble to the summit and descend the Eastern slopes. By now it was just possible to see Bro. Richard some 1000 ft. above signalling out to the crew, and I told them that Bro. Richard could indicate to them exactly where the trapped climbers lay. They immediately took to the air and by help of direction given by Bro. Richard were able to pin-point with their search light the location of the climbers. However as they were not equipped with rescue apparatus, they had done all they could at that time, so once again they came to ground to signal Air Corps H.Q. at Baldonnel to send immediate help. It was now approximately 9.30. It was no longer dusk, but getting dark. The wind had strengthened further, but thankfully the threatening mist had dispersed. I gather from the crew of the Air Corps helicopter from Finner that landing on the summit was too dangerous, owing to the strength of the wind.

So we settled down to await the arrival of the craft from Baldonnel, all the time reassuring the trapped couple vocally that help was on the way.

At 10.15 - it was now quite dark - we heard the approach of the Baldonnel craft. The crew from Finner also took off, and with both craft in the air, their search lights lighting up the mountain, the roar of engines driving the mountain sheep helter-skelter, their navigation lights winking continuously, the scene was finally set, for what came to be described as the most daring and courageous rescue to be carried out by the Air Corps.

Having no knowledge of the technicalities of helicopter piloting, I can only describe what I saw, and felt, and feared, as these so versatile craft closed in on the mountain and on the site of the rescue. The Finner craft was of first importance, the crew knew where the trapped climbers lay. They had to get their landing light fixed on the exact location of the rescue bid and hold steady for the other crew: a fact that must have been difficult in the conditions already described, and with the inconsistency of a strong wind bouncing off the cliff face. They obviously did their operation with precision, as the second within seconds, was hovering over the first target. The pilot of the Baldonnel craft, had an even trickier task. How close he got to the cliff face I cannot tell, but to us standing 1200 ft. below it looked as if any moment the blades of his craft must dissolve into atoms by striking the rock-face. So immersed were the onlookers in the dreadful prospect of an even worse tragedy, that when the craft pulled away from the mountain face, the first climber safely aboard, all breathed a long sigh of relief.

(Continued on page 143)

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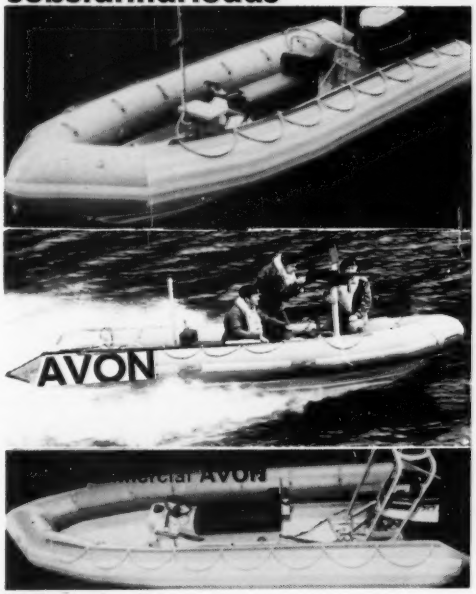

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The road before you
Led
From Ireland
And from gentle hills
To searing sky
And brown
Of Lebanon?
And did you know
This honour-path
You trod
But queried not
Would lead
To doom and glory?
But soldier
Let no tears
Be shed for you
Or shallow sympathy
Expressed.
For tears could never be
The measure of
Your sacrifice,
All in the line of duty.
And know
The gift you gave
May help effect
Salvation from our folly.

Seamus Ua Trodd

Memorial to Comdt. Thomas Wickham

During his recent visit to the Middle East, the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Callaghan visited Tiberias in Northern Israel, to unveil a memorial plaque to the late Comdt. Thomas Wickham who died, in the service of peace, on 7 June 1967, while serving with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation. The ceremony which took place at St. Peter's Church, Tiberias, consisted of the unveiling and blessing of the memorial plaque, followed by Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Umberto, the resident Franciscan custodian of the church. The setting for the memorial in St. Peter's Church on the tranquil shores of the Sea of Galilee is in sharp contrast with the hostile battle ground of the Golan Heights which overlooks it. The church was constructed about 1100 A.D. by the Crusaders.

From the middle of the 17th century the Franciscans began to travel from Nazareth each year to celebrate the feast of St. Peter at the site. Later in the century the church was handed to the Franciscans. In 1847 they added a monastery to the site and remain as custodians to this day.

The ceremony was attended by all available Irish observers and their families from various parts of the Middle East.

Also in attendance were a number of Irish Field Service Officers serving on the Middle East, including Mr. Jim Connolly, Mr. John Maloney, Mr. and Mrs. Don Quirke, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Foran and Mr. and Mrs. Gerry Byrnes.

The ceremony was followed by a lunch at the nearby Plaza Hotel, during which the Adjutant General, Gen. Callaghan was welcomed to Tiberias by the Chief of Observer Group Golan Tiberias Maj. Gert Nielsen of Denmark. Gen. Callaghan addressed the gathering paying tribute to the professionalism and dedication of the late Comdt. Wickham. He expressed his regret that war should bring such tragedy and sorrow to such a beautiful area and particularly when it resulted in the death of a fellow officer, whose primary task was to help bring peace to the Middle East under the auspices of United Nations. He hoped that the memorial would act as a fitting reminder of the supreme sacrifice made by the late Comdt. Wickham in the service of peace.

OBITUARIES

Pte. Thomas Barrett

Thomas Barrett enlisted on 23rd December, 1969, and underwent his recruit training in CTD in Cork. On completion he was assigned to the 4th Inf. Bn.

In 1971 he served in Cyprus with the 20th Inf. Group where he was judged as an excellent soldier. On his return from overseas (in November, 1971) he married Emily O'Shea, and they had three children, Karen (age 6), Janice (age 4) and Paula (age 2).

After his initial 3 years service he decided to try life outside the forces , but he remained in uniform by opting to work with CIE. In 1974 he re-enlisted with 3 Garr, AOC. He succesfully completed an MT Drivers Course in CTC 1976. He was a top class driver with an accident free record.
driver with an accident free record.

When the 44 Bn. was been formed for the Lebanon he immediately volunteered but was unsuccessful. Recognising that he would be better placed in an Infantry Unit, he transferred to 4 Bn. to increase his chances.

He served with "B" Coy of the 44 Bn. with distinction, and his mature good humour made him a very valuable member of the team. He served in At-Tiri and accepted the trying conditions without a fuss. However, it was at Blida, a tiny outpost in the enclave, that Tom Barrett's friendliness and good spirits endeared him to the locals. It was ironic indeed that these same people took his life.

He was quick to volunteer for a second tour and with his fine record he was an automatic selection. He gave the 46 Bn. the same unstinted service and was within sight of homecoming when he was murdered. He was a good soldier, a fine man and great peacemaker. He will be sadly missed in the 4 Bn.

The shock of his death effects not only his wife and family, but also his friends and comrades who have served with him. Let us not forget him, let us not forget his wife and family, and above all let us not forget the cause for which he died.

T. G.

Pte. Derek Smallhorne

Pte. Smallhorne was born on the 1st March 1949 at 50 Drumfinn Avenue, Ballyfermot. He was the eldest boy in a family of eight. He was married on the 26th September 1970 and settled at 10 Huband Road, Bluebell, Inchicore. Pte. Smallhorne enlisted on the 17th January 1974 in the CTD (E) Cathal Brugha Bks. and did his recruit training in Collins Bks. with the 5 Inf. Bn. His Pl Comd. was Capt. Billy O'Hara and his Pl Sgt. was Ex Sgt. Dan Carthy.

He served with the 5 Inf. Bn. after recruit training and on the 25th November 1976 he went on his Tech. MT Drivers Course which he passed on the 25th January 1977.

He joined the 46 Inf. Bn. in September of 1979 and departed for Lebanon on the 15th October 1979. He quickly established himself as a fine soldier and was popular with both his comrades and the local people. Derek Smallhorne will be sadly missed by hys wife Martha, and children Derek, Lynn and Kim, but most of all by all the men who served with him. The Army has lost a great character and a true soldier.

Pts. Barrett and Smallhorne were killed at Bennt Jbail, South Lebanon on 18 April, 1980.

KNOCK PILGRIMAGE

In the Knock Shrine Annual just issued the Army pilgrimage of July last year is mentioned. Units from all Comds. led by the Chief of Staff combined to make a total of over 2,000 Military pilgrims.

FUNERALS OF PTES. GRIFFIN, SMALLHORNE AND BARRETT

The remains of Pte S. Griffin with Pall bearers from the 2nd Garrison MPC. (Photo: Tom Lawlor).

The remains of Pte. P. Barrett with Pall Bearers of the 4th Inf. Bn. (Photo: Cork Examiner)

Graveside scene at the funeral of Pte. D. Smallhorn. (Photo: Joe Fay)

Maj. Gen. W. Callaghan, Adjt. Gen., An Taoiseach, Mr. C. Haughey and Lt. Gen. C. O'Sullivan, Chief of Staff at the funeral of Pte. S. Griffin. (Photo: Tom Lawlor)

Officiating Chaplain's Fr. R. Fields CF and Fr. P. Breslin CF.

Members of 2 Garr. MPC at the funeral of Pte. S. Griffin.

47 Inf. Bn. UNIFIL

Comdt. T. Murphy, 2 i/c 47 Inf. Bn. with BSM R. O'Halloran, at the March Past of the Bn. in McKee Bks., Dublin. (Photo: P. Jones)

An Taoiseach, Mr. C. Haughey, meeting relatives of members of the 47 Inf. Bn. (Photo: P. Jones).

Pte. L. Moore, 47 Inf. Bn. with his wife and parents. (Photo: P. Jones).

Pte. N. Shanahan (centre) and family. (Photo: P. Jones)

At Collins Bks., Dublin, before Departure for the Lebanon L/R: Sgt. J. Fitzgerald, Cpl. D. O'Neill, Cpl. W. Copper, Pte. D. Bell, Pte. J. Smith, Pte. D. Breen, Pte. M. Brady, Pte. P. Booth. (Photo: Irish Independent).

Lt. Col. F. Stewart, OC 47 Inf. Bn., with BSM R. O'Halloran and (left to right) Ptes. W. Leigh, N. Brennan, E. Kelleher, P. Devine and Cpl. P. Doyle. (Photo: O. McCrossan).

Summer Band Recitals
by the Army No. 1 Band

Wednesday June 11th, Merrion Square, 1300 hrs-1400 hrs.
Sunday, June 15th, Howth Promenade, 1530 hrs-1700 hrs.
Sunday, July 6th, St. Anne's, Raheny, 1530 hrs-1700 hrs.
Wednesday, July 16th, Merrion Square, 1300 hrs-1400 hrs.
Sunday, July 20th, Herbert Park, 1530 hrs-1700 hrs.
Sunday, August 31st, Bushy Park, 1530 hrs.-1700 hrs.

PUNCHESTOWN

This year visitors to Punchestown Races found that the Curragh Command had been allotted a new Club Room in the new stand. It was opened by the Chief of Staff, on 29th April.

HONOUR FOR COLONEL

At the end of a visit of Geidhlic poets, an exchange between Ireland and Scotland which has continued for 10 years, a presentation was made to Col. Eoghan O'Neill retd., who has done much to encourage this activity.

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WESTERN COMMAND

L/R - C/S M. Collins, Sgt. A. Byrne, and Sgt. J. Ferry, 6 Inf. Bn., in the Glen. (Photo: Cpl. P. O'Callaghan).

C/S M. Collins and Capt. N. O'Grady, 6 Inf. Bn., in the Glen. (Photo: Cpl. P. O'Callaghan).

6 Inf. Bn. firing the 81mm Mortar and 90mm A/TK in Glen of Imaal. (Photo: Cpl. P. O'Callaghan).

Members of Sp. Coy., 6 Inf. Bn. in Glen of Imaal. L/R - Back row: Sgt. A. Byrne, Pte. J. Karney, Pte. M. Rattigan, Cpl. D. Dotherty, Pte. P. Conroy, Pte. T. Redins, Pte. B. Woods, Pte. J. Cooney, Pte. A. Berry, Pte. E. Costello, Pte. P. Lynch, Pte. J. Fallon, Pte. J. Cummins, Pte. B. Newcombe, Cpl. P. Rowan, Pte. P. Byrne, Pte. T. Lafferty, Cpl. W. Ryan, Pte. J. Shine, Sgt. D. Molloy, Cpl. D. Murphy. Front Row: Pte. T. Horan, Pte. P. O'Brien, Pte. J. Roper, Pte. F. Hyland, Pte. J. Gahan, Pte. S. Horan, Pte. F. Martin, Pte. J. Lynch, Pte. M. Stephens, Pte. J. Grehan, Pte. M. Garoin, Sgt. T. Colish. (Photo: Cpl. P. O'Callaghan).

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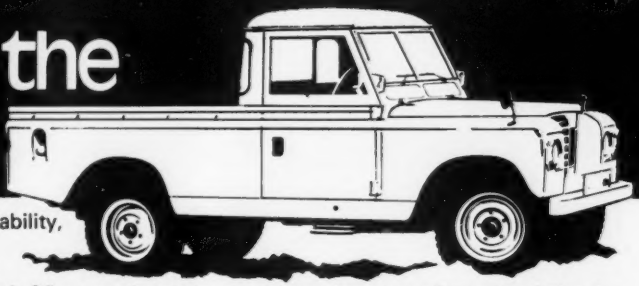

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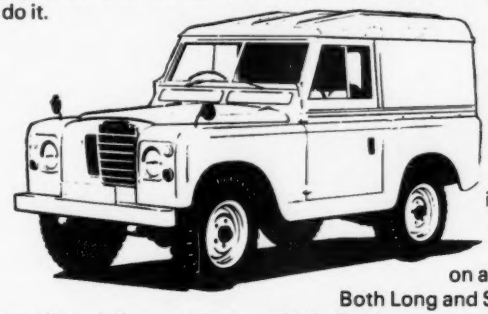

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SOUTHERN COMMAND

Instructors on the Anti-Tank Course at Collins Bks., Cork, L/R Capt. B. Reade, Sgt. E. Gaffney, Sgt. T. McSweeney, Sgt. J. McCarthy, Sgt. M. Heaney. (Photo: Sgt. M. Twomey)

Students on an Anti-Tank Course, L/R Cpl. T. Barry (Loader), Sgt. R. Mulvey (Firer). (Photo: Sgt. M. Twomey).

At the Passing Out Parade of 38 Pl. Collins Bks., Cork, were L/R: Sgt. W. O'Shea and his son Pte. J. O'Shea, and BQMS M. Leahy and son, Pte. J. Leahy. (Photo: Sgt. M. Twomey).

Mr. M. McMahon, PRO, Benson & Hedges, Presenting a Trophy to Capt. P. O'Brien for S/Comd. Snooker C'ships. Also included is BSM B. Lennon. (Photo: Sgt. M. Twomey)

15th Bn. Pipe Band. Front row - L/R: Pte. J. O'Regan, Lt. D. O'Shea, OC Band, Sgt. J. Switzer, Pte. L. Dowd, Pte. W. Hobbard. Second Row - L/R: Pte. J. O'Mahoney, Cpl. J. Casey, Pte. D. Donaghue, Pte. K. Hurley, Pte. J. Sheehan. Back row: Pte. R. O'Shea, Pte. M. Trant, Pte. J. Boylan.

OFFICERS PROMOTIONS - APRIL

Name	To	From	To
Glenn, W.	A/Col.	O.C. Adm. Wing Air Corps.	Group Comdr., H.Q. Air Corps. Group
Maloney, L.	A/Capt (NS)	O.C. Naval Base & Dkyd.	Retains present appointment
Stewart, F.	A/Lt. Col.	Ops. Staff HQ C/Comd.	OC 47 Inf. Bn.
Monaghan, J.	A/Comdt.	Med. Corps. att. 27 Inf. Bn.	M.O. 47 Inf. Bn.
Hayden, P.	A/Comdt.	1 Hosp. Coy.	M O. 47 Inf. Bn.
O'Connor, A.	A/Comdt.	4 Garr. Ord. Coy.	Ord. Offr. 47 Inf. Bn.

NCOs PROMOTIONS - APRIL

Rank	Name	Unit	Rank Promoted To
Sgt.	Coy, J.	12 Inf. Bn.	Coy./Sgt.
Sgt.	Hutchinson, J.	2 Inf. Bn.	Coy./Sgt.
CQMS	O'Shea, W.	3 Grn. MPC	Coy./Sgt.
Sgt.	Byrne, P.	2 Mot. Sqn.	CQMS
Sgt.	Gavin, P.	5 Mot. Sqn.	CQMS
Sgt.	Evans, M.	2 Mot. Sqn.	CQMS

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WHAT THE PAPERS NOTICE

LEBANON

The papers noticed so much about the Defence Forces during the month of April that it is difficult not to demand a complete edition to cover the coverage. It was all dramatic with "Army" headlines morning and evening for days on end. Tragic too of course with the sad returning home of Stephen Griffin, Thomas Barrett and Derek Smallhorne. Their military funerals with grief-stricken family photographs reminded one inevitably of Niemba. The same sad thought occurred to someone in the *Irish Press* and they visited Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly whose husband was killed in the Niemba ambush.

"It brings it all back to me" said Mrs. Kelly. "I felt very sad when I read about it in the papers. It was just like reading about the death of my husband 20 years ago. I was so upset last week I could not go out."

"My heart goes out to Mrs. Smallhorne and Mrs. Barrett. How do you tell young children their Daddy is not coming home."

One of the Kelly children, Caroline, who will be 21 in October wants to follow in the proud tradition of her father. She has just applied to join the Army.

All the papers had reporters in the field at various times and the personnel of 46th Bn. must be the most experienced interviewees in any force. They came out with flying colours in their answers and reactions.

The editorial staffs were busy too and a selection of their work seems best to sum up the mood of the country and the press.

IRISH PRESS - THE PEACEMAKER

Stephen Griffin gave his life for peace. He may not have seen his role in the Lebanon in such elevated terms. He was doing his job - holding the line, as soldiers must always do when the politicians fail. He served loyally and paid the highest price a man can pay. He was worthy of all the honour that has been given to him.

Many of the soldiers at Pte. Griffin's funeral are bound for the Lebanon themselves. They know that their mission is fraught with danger but they know, too, that they are not being asked to risk their lives to satisfy some imperialistic ambition or burst of jingoist fervour. They can take pride and consolation from the words of Bishop Casey:

"The men of our Army have offered themselves as an instrument of peace and they are inevitably in danger of losing their lives to save the lives of others. But can anything be more Christian? Is not this task totally honourable? Isn't it one we must carry out?"

IRISH TIMES - STEADY

The Government will show its mettle over the next few days by its attitude to the events in the Lebanon and the consequences at home, as much as it will in any other area of its responsibilities.

It will maintain the resolute stand set out in its statement of Sunday. It will continue to remind us that this is not a quarrel between Ireland and any faction in the Middle East; it is a question of Irishmen acting as international soldiers, whose sole aim is peace-making in that area. Our interests are the interests of humanity as represented - imperfectly, of course - by the United Nations.

We have suffered casualties in the course of these duties and are victims, too, of some misrepresentation. But the way through is to hew strictly to the code of conduct of the United Nations and not to become embroiled as a people in any unnecessary crossfire line.

It will best represent the country's grief at the casualties by studied moderation. It is neither pretentious nor vainglorious of the State to make of the obsequies an occasion of mourning and an occasion to remind us all that our international involvements include penalties as well as benefits.

Our troops on the ground are maintaining their nerve and their dignity. So should we all.

The Army Rugby XV Captain, Captain C. Fitzgerald, receiving the Trophy after the Army V's Garda victory on 29th April. Presenting the trophy is Mr. Gordan Wood. Also present C/Supt. J. Murphy and Lt. Col. V. Savino.

(Photo: Garda Press Office)

IRISH INDEPENDENT - IRISH UNDER FIRE

An Irish soldier seriously wounded by Christian Arab militiamen and others taken hostage by them - this is just the tip of the dangerous iceberg now rending Southern Lebanon. These militiamen have shown themselves once more as volatile irregulars whose confidence remains bolstered by Israeli help and who have a well documented history of firing at and injuring and killing other UNIFIL troops since that force came into action.

There can be no doubt about the disciplined attitude of the Irish troops; they are in the Lebanon not to wage war on either Christian or Moslem Arabs but, under United Nations mandate, to try to hold neutral a zone between Israel and the rest of the Lebanon. By their restrained conduct they have displayed their understanding of this mandate and performed to the highest standards.

CORK EXAMINER - TIME FOR COOL HEADS

Ireland is paying dearly for its involvements in its U.N. peace-keeping roles. As a shocked nation became aware of the deaths of three young Irish soldiers in the Lebanon over the past week people also began to ask questions about the monetary cost. The truth is that the U.N. owes this nation about £2.6 million and that debt is mounting at the rate of £400,000 for every six months tour of duty by an Irish battalion.

In the circumstances (the death of three Irish soldiers, two of whom were murdered in cold blood) it was obvious that Ireland's peacekeeping involvement in the Lebanon should be questioned. The Cabinet with commendable urgency did that yesterday. They decided to remain, a decision which was generally expected and will be understood by the people.

Perhaps in the emotional state of the nation at the horror deaths of three of our young soldiers there might be a strong inclination for a "troops out" from the Lebanon but the Cabinet was aware, that a precipitate withdrawal from South Lebanon could possibly lead to a greater and wider war. It is a time for cool heads.

LEST WE FORGET

The pictures and news reports were not all of tragic events far away. The photographs in all papers showed a group of sad Gormanston men looking at the wreckage of the Chipmunk which had cost the lives of their two young comrades Lieut. Alan Hickey and Cpl. John Monahan. Lieut. Col. Pat Cranfield, their C.O., told the Press that Lieut. Hickey was an experienced officer who had joined the Air Corps in 1974. Cpl. Monahan had joined in 1973.

Presentation by Mr. S. Dubhthaig to the National Museum of 3 weapons associated with the War of Independence. Photo Shows L/R: Miss K. O'Duffy, Mr. S. O'Dubhthaig, Mrs. B. O'Duffy and Mr. S. O'Teachain, Keeper Art and Industrial Division, National Museum. (Photo: Lensmen)

HISTORY

We have remarked before on the confusion that will reign among future military historians, as they emerge from their nuclear shelters, about the 1980 Army policy of sending FCA Battalions on UN Service overseas. As they sift through charred and yellowed copies of the *Cork Examiner* they will come across the following in the issue for 2 April, 1980.

"47th BATTALION ACTIVATED

The 47th Infantry Battalion has recently been activated for service in the LEBANON.

The old 47th Battalion was an FCA Battalion and its area consisted roughly of Cork City North, Blarney, Dripsey and Rathduff areas. It remained in existence until October, 1959.

On integration of the FCA with the regular army in that year, the old 47th Battalion became "A" Coy. of the 23rd Infantry Battalion FCA and as such it exists to the present day.

Many of the 47th Battalion officers gave loyal service to the new A Coy. 23rd Infantry Battalion and on the formation of the new 47th Battalion for UNIFIL duty it was decided to present the flag and pennant from the old to the new Unit.

Comdt. Christy Crowley (Rtd.) is the last surviving o/c 47th Battalion and he presented the colours to Lt. Col. Frank Stewart, o/c new 47th Battalion. Lt. Col. Stewart presented a plaque to A Coy. 23rd Battalion to commemorate the occasion."

Do you think they'll ever work it out in the 2000's? The old 47th, the 23rd, and the new 47th? Will anyone be around to worry.

In the matter of terminology: When the old 47th became the 23rd it was integrated. Now that its started off again is it disintegrated? Anyway that old association with Blarney should prove useful out there.

NORTH AND SOUTH

Two provincial papers, *The Longford Leader* and *The Limerick Leader* visited units "in action".

The Longford Leaders staff reporter Andrew Kelly, joined the 4th Motor Squadron in a border patrol and had this arresting introduction

"The landrovers screeched to a halt and the men were out in seconds and running off the road in search of cover. Troopers with FN rifles crouched behind walls, bushes and the backs of the rovers. NCOs carrying Swedish Gustav Sub-Machine guns, found their own cover and then checked on the troopers.

The house was only a few yards away and nobody knew who, or what, was inside.

This was no game they were playing. And although the men showed no concern, worry or anxiety, they were very careful and professional. Nobody made mistakes. Being shot at is no joke.

For these men being shot at, or blown up is a very real possibility."

The Limerick Leader reporter visited "Limericks Soldiers of Mercy" 3rd Field Medical Company. The article was very fully illustrated with photographs showing the Director, Colonel L. O'Toole, listening to a lecture, and classes on "fractured legs", "artificial respiration" and all the other ills the flesh is heir to and the Medics have to tackle. Two interesting photographs were the members of the Unit pistol team and "Sgt. Andrews and Pte. Mulcahy who represented the company in a recent air gun shooting competition."

Sure we don't know how the other half lives at all.

CAREERS

The Irish Times in their series on Careers and Living came to No. 7, The Army. Christina Murphy looked at "the career opportunities for men and women in the modern army." As a prominent contributor to the *Times* Womens Page it must have pleased her to record that - "The Army is no longer an all male preserve. There is now a Women's Service Corps too and the first women cadets have just commenced their training in the Army Cadet School in the Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare."

The article contained lots of information on Cadets, Apprentices etc. and had this fair conclusion:-

"DISCIPLINE

There are disadvantages, too. Discipline is an important part of Army life and can be fairly strict. Some young people can find this difficult to take, particularly, I am told, apprentices, who often think of the thing simply as an apprenticeship, without realising that it is part of the Army. The loss of personal freedom, of individuality can be a problem, too. And army life can be demanding on family life - night and weekend duty, border duty, tours abroad. Some views, too, find the strain of "camp" life hard to take.

I am told, too, that living conditions for ordinary soldiers in several barracks, still leave a lot to be desired. If you're not an active kind of person, don't like sport and outdoor life, then you're not likely to do very well in the Army - but don't think it's all battleground stuff, either. There is a lot of administrative, desk and training work for cadets and officers. Good health is essential - I've heard of numbers of people failing the medical because they were colour-blind - and service in the FCA, the scouts or other such organisation is a useful background - and usually improves the chances of being selected."

On the same page Peadar Kirby talked to Private Daniel O'Connell about his life as a soldier. Daniel joined the Army because "he never wanted to work in an office". Another Liberator. His summing up of that famous TV advertisement was "a bit glamourised, like a trailer from a film, they always show the best bit". That doesn't mean he has been disappointed. "I'm not complaining. I came in with no big ideas and I take what comes." Maybe we should use Daniel on the next advertisement.

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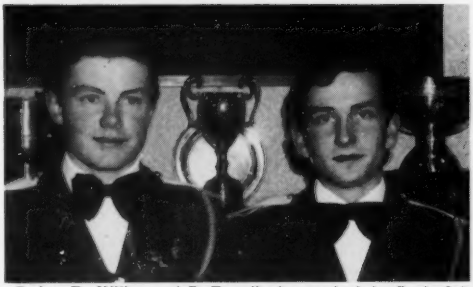
RSM T. Sinnott on the occasion of his stand down parade, with Lt. Col. F. Lawless and Comdt. L. Young at Plunkett Bks., CTC. (Photo: O. McCrossan).



Cadets D. Killian and P. Farrell who reached the final of the *IRISH TIMES* debating competition. (Photo: C/Comd. Press Office).

FINALE

The Cork Examiner had a nostalgic article on the departure from Army Musical circles of Lieut Col. R. B. (Bonnie) Kealy who conducted the Band of the Southern Command for the last time at a Concert in Connolly Hall, Cork. As the *Examiner* said:

"But as he takes off his uniform at the end of the evening, Lt. Col. Kealy does so in the knowledge of the pleasure he has brought to so many, not only at formal military functions with the band, but also through his close involvement over many years with the Collins Musical Society shows.

They were many: "New Moon", "The Desert Song", "Show Boat", "Naughty Marietta", "The Land of Smiles", "The Vagabond King", and "Rose Marie". Other appearances took place at the Rose of Tralee Festival and the Spring Shows and Horse Shows at the R.D.S.

Locally, music-lovers will remember the famous band recitals at Fitzgerald Park, Cork, and at Tralee, Clonmel, and Limerick, during a conductorship of the Southern Command band which lasted more than 40 years.

Lt. Col. Kealy is the only officer in the Army School of Music to have been conductor of all four bands, albeit his time with No. 1 Band was very short. He also served longer with the Band of the Southern Command than any other officer did with one band.

He won the McCormack Cup for the Inter-Bands Competition in 1960 and the Recital Cup in the same competition in 1969. He was musical director and co-founder of the Collins Musical Society, and as conductor of the Cork City Choral Society was the first conductor of a Cork choir to win a major trophy at the Cork International Choral Festival when he won the National Trophy for Irish Choirs in the early years of the Festival.

He will retire from the army on July 16 and not only his colleagues but music-lovers everywhere will wish him every happiness."

Hear, Hear.

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The Daily Telegraph had been publishing a list of amusing extracts from Headmasters School Reports on wayward pupils when the R.N. put an oar in. We republish for the perusal of Senior Naval Service readers:

"FLIMSY EVIDENCE

No sooner have I cried hold, enough, said the deluge of school reports than my readers are switching their sights to the "flimsies" written about Naval officers by their Captains, such as "the only reason for men to follow this officer would be out of curiousity".

There are several variations on the theme of "carrying out his duties to his own entire satisfaction" including the somewhat resigned: "This officer has conducted himself to my wife's entire satisfaction."

But I fear the majority are concerned with sobriety, as in: "This officer would do well to devote more of his attention to the common task and less to the daily round."

One officer protested at a report which read: "Has been known to return on board drunk". So his captain obligingly agreed to change it. The end result was: "Has been known to return on board sober."

M. and D.

The Irish Medical Association at their Annual General Meeting in Sligo had some hard things to say about the staffing of our Medical Corps and all the papers made it headline news.

"Doctors advised not to apply for army jobs" said the *Irish Times*. "Troops not getting the best of Medical Care" warned the *Evening Herald*. "Young doctors advised not to join the Army" repeated the *Irish Independent*.

Kevin Moore in the *Herald* quoted Dr. Noel Reilly secretary of the IMA as saying "he had great difficulty in getting the Army to negotiate. He had a file of correspondence six inches thick on the problem." Dr. David Nowlan in the *Irish Times* thought it was the Department of Defence who were proving difficult, "and the result now was that the salary for army doctors would not attract any applicants to work in the Medical Corps. Those young doctors who did go into Army service tended to leave after a few years."

Evidently an apple a day, and the IMA, keep the doctors away. But keep up the jogging, the following resolution was passed unanimously and referred to the Central Council (IMA not GAA) for immediate action. "Bearing in mind the recent salary increases in other Branches of the Medical profession and in order to attract young doctors to join the Army Medical Corps and to remain in it, the IMA negotiates with the Department of Defence adequate salaries for Army Medical Officers."

Minister for Defence, Mr. P. Faulkner, inspecting a Guard of Honour in Dundalk Military Bks., accompanied by Lt. E. Scanlon, 27th Inf. Bn. (Photo: Sgt. J. Callaghan).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Ardlea",
38 Ashley Gardens,
Landsdowne Road,
Belfast 15 4DN.

Editor,
An Cosantoir.

Dear Sir,

The recent tragic deaths of the three Irish soldiers serving with the United Nations peacekeeping force in Southern Lebanon, only reinforces the view, that the Irish Forces stationed in that potentially explosive region should be equipped with most up to date weapon systems available to the army. At present, the Army's heavy armoured car the French built Panhard Aml: 90 is quite capable in dealing with the Christian Militia's Israeli built and supplied Supersherman tanks. But should these unfriendly belligerents in the Lebanese conflict, acquire more modern and sophisticated heavy armour, such as the Israeli army's M48, M60 and Centurion tanks, I would advise that the Irish contingent be equipped to meet such an eventuality. I have no doubt that the Calvary Corps Aml 90 crews are very capable in knocking out enemy tanks, but I would venture to say that the Aml 90 is a poor match for the modern heavy armour, which is much in abundance in that volatile area. So I suggest that the new replacement battalion which is due to replace the 46th battalion, should be equipped with the recently acquired Milan guided Anti-tank missile system. This light weight sophisticated weapon system would prove a welcomed deterrent to the blood thirsty Christian militia tank crews. A similar such missile system is currently in service with the Dutch UNIFIL unit, namely the Tow anti tank missile system. By adding the Milan to the Irish contingent's arsenal, I believe that this would silence any disquiet among the general public, that the Irish contingent serving with UNIFIL was poorly equipped, also the Artillery Corp's Milan crews would gain very valuable experience from their Lebanese stint, thus raising the effectiveness of the Corps guided weapons section. I dearly hope that this suggestion will be taken up and that the addition of the Milan to the Irish units defensive armoury will help to ensure that if future attacks occur on Irish U.N. outposts, by the Israeli backed Christian Militia the resident Irish contingent will oblige them with a hell of a fight.

Yours faithfully,
Aidan McIvor.

27 Pembroke Road,
Dublin 4.

Editor,
An Cosantoir

Sir,

The publication of Memories of Long Ago in *An Cosantoir* recently brings some thoughts of over half a century ago to mind.

During the War of Independence a Pastoral from the Bishop of Cork, Dr. Cahalan, forbade the giving of absolution to anyone, who, when the priest asked: "have you taken up arms against the Legally Constituted Government?" answered yes. This edict was very distressing to the families of those who walked out of the churches in Cork when it was read out. I think the bishop was the only one who issued this pastoral. A West Cork man who came into Cork to take part in an engagement called the 'Anti-Sinn Fein' went to confession and, when asked by the priest if he had or was about to take up arms, said "God father that's why I am here". So he left and went back to Ballineer where he had a priest friend; when he knocked on his door and said he wanted to go to confession the priest said to him "come in Mick, how many of the ruffians did you shoot?" I am sure this was embellished.

Cork had another distinction during those times not so well known. It was the only place in the country where we had curfew at four in the afternoon. We used to make our way coming from 'The Mon' where we had delayed too long, from church to church dodging the Black and Tans or the Aussies. Sometimes we were not so lucky. I remember a few of us being caught outside St. Augustines, and being beaten with whips taken off the jarvey's who then plied the streets of Cork.

A great Cork Comedian, Danny Hobbs, used to tell a story about going to confession, purely to illustrate the Cork accent. This fellow was looking for a priest who would not be too hard on him, and a pal recommended one at St. Peter and Pauls. He went in, told his sins but the priest had a lot to say to him. He asked him did he know Patrick's Hill? "Yerra father sure I was born in Blackpool." "Now this is your penance. You have to walk up Patrick's Hill, but for every two steps up, you have to take one step back." Your man was delighted, but when he got to the end of panna and looked up at the hill, he decided to fortify himself with a few pints, before he started with his two steps up and one step back. When he got about a quarter of the way up he said to himself "the sin is never worth it". However, he soldiered on and when he got about three quarters up he saw a woman coming down with a wooden leg and, as it was the time of the long skirts, she was having trouble as her skirt was catching in her wooden leg. When she got near him, she said "young man, I'm having terrible trouble with my skirt catching in me leg. Would you ever lift it." "Yerra Mam says he, I'm doing dis for doing dat"!

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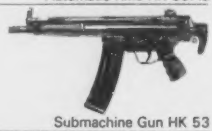

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